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# INSIDE PARIS

DURING

THE SIEGE.

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*Markheim, Henry William Gegg.*

# INSIDE PARIS

DURING

## THE SIEGE.

BY

AN OXFORD GRADUATE.

*"C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, Lecteur."*

MONTAIGNE.

London and New York :

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1871.

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## P R E F A C E.

I WOULD fain beg of all benevolent and kindly-disposed persons three privileges as essential to the telling of my tale. First, that I may be allowed to abstain from strategy, for I confess I am no strategist—indeed, during the whole time the siege lasted, I did not so much as possess “a plan of my own” for the Deliverance of Paris. The second is permission to tell my story in my own way, without invention or embellishment; and the third, that I may be relieved from the irksome responsibility of passing sentence of condemnation or approval upon what I narrate. My object is to bring forward as faithfully as I could observe it, whatever may tend to dispel the con-



ventionalities of history which efface the true human interest of things. Legends are facts from which the life and colour have faded ; and I sincerely trust that the siege I have witnessed may never become *legendary*, that something of its original Parisian *naïveté* may outlive its numerous historians.

LONDON, *Feb.*, 1871.

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# INSIDE PARIS

## DURING THE SIEGE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PREPARATION FOR THE SIEGE.

ON Monday, the 19th September, the network of iron which for the last five days had been gradually closing around us, was drawn tight across our throats at Chatillon, and we were left in Bismarckian language, "to stew in our own gravy." A gentle intimation of the real state of things was conveyed to us through the *Official Journal*, which prepared us "not to feel surprised at the absence of telegraphic intelligence from the country." Unconscious disbelievers in the siege who attempted that morning to take a final peep at their country-houses in the West, found to their great dismay the bridges of Sèvres and St. Cloud blown up, and met disbanded troops of Zouaves and infantry pouring into the streets of the capital with sad tales of panic and "treason" from the rout at

Chatillon. Gradually, as the consciousness of captivity dawned more fully upon us, we hastened to the various heights within the town, from whence we could survey the boundaries of our prison. The imposing semi-circle formed southwards and westwards by the continuous ridge of Chatillon, Clamart, Meudon, Sèvres and St. Cloud, the surrounding heights of St. Denis on the north, the windings of the Marne and the woody Vincennes on the east, became thenceforth the horizon of our world. A world indeed: for it contained a nation, a Government—though frail and insecure and swaying to and fro with each breath of faction, yet the sole wreck of Government in France—and the destinies of forty millions of Frenchmen. The bitter truth must be accepted in all its bitterness. Paris, which we had fondly accustomed ourselves to consider as the “capital of civilization,” Paris the wonder and delight of Europe, revolutionary Paris with its clubs and orators and myriads of armed men, was compelled to submit to the fate of an ordinary humdrum provincial fortress. Truly, there was something tragic and queenly in her forlorn condition—forsaken of her lovers and friends and acquaintances, who knew her not in the hour of danger and distress. Was it really true that Europe could quietly make up its mind to do without us? What! no *Deus ex machina*, no miracle of the eleventh hour to save us? There was pain, humilia-

tion, anguish in the imperturbable serenity of mankind and nature. That great Oracle of which we stand in silent awe, that Pythian prude of many suitors, the *Times*, "*ce coquin de Times en un mot*," took leave of us with sundry speculations as to how much bread and water of affliction would tame our rebellious spirit, and how long "the city of luxury and pleasure" would consent to endure the miseries of a siege. "The city of luxury and pleasure"—there was a nasal puritanical twang about that which offended more than the smell of Bismarck's cookery: we would rather *stew* than be preached to.

A town that once feels itself besieged settles down to the siege, and the first distant roll of the enemy's thunder brings the same relief to the nerves as the first big drops burst from a thunder-cloud on a sultry day. With the fight of Chatillon at noon, and the Prussians still outside our walls at sunset, the siege of Paris had lost half its terrors to the imagination, and had begun to pass into the common-place of fact. But before taking up at this point the thread of my story, and proceeding with the recital of what, during our long months of captivity, we did or said or felt or suffered, I think it may be as well to pause and look backwards at the critical stages through which we had passed since the day when the first disasters of the campaign opened to us the distant prospect of what we now confronted.

Eye-witnesses of the scene which the boulevards presented on the nights of the 5th and 6th of August, can scarcely fail to recollect how the news of Wissenbourg sent Paris howling with rage and disappointment, mingled with consternation, and how the subsequent tidings of Wörth and Forbach struck her dumb with blank dismay. At once, the speedy collapse of the dynasty appeared inevitable; but what, perhaps, mere lookers-on were less prepared to witness, was the sudden and entire collapse of patriotic feeling in the capital; they had not sufficiently perceived from the first that Parisian patriotism had not as yet got beyond the stage of an exuberant Chauvinism,\* confined to theatres, cafés, concerts, and boulevards, and fed with extravagant anticipations of fresh Magentas and Solferinos, military promenades and triumphal entry into Berlin by the 15th of August.

Now the drunken revel was over; Paris had danced out her imperial cancan, and woke to find herself, like Pierrot in jail, lying hopelessly prostrate in her drunkenness. It was painful to observe how vacantly she would stare at her regiments crossing her wide streets and avenues on their way to the invaded frontier. On they trudged, weary, overladen and forlorn, meeting with small comfort and still less welcome. The crowd gazed silently as they passed by; or if faint

\* Chauvinism, from Chauvin, the type of a blustering patriot.

cheering broke the general silence, it only made it felt the more depressing. Unthankful, wayward Paris—what were her soldiers to her but broken playthings to a disappointed child?

In this state of utter prostration, Paris surrendered to a new Cabinet, with Palikao at its head. It was well known that the chief recommendation of the "Chinese Count" to this post of supreme trust was a career of distinguished unscrupulousness in Africa and China which involved him in the desperate fortunes of the empire. But Paris was lost to all sense of reality. She put her faith in shams, and endured Palikao as a cleverer sham than Ollivier and Gramont. The working classes, who as a class had shown from the outset strong aversion to this war, remained in their faubourgs sullen and threatening, after some ineffectual demonstrations against the Legislative Body. Working men would congregate in knots around the ramparts and saunter on the slopes of the glacis, shrugging their shoulders at such vain demonstrations of defence as were then apparent—a few bronze 24-pounders lying on the grassy platforms of the bastions, half-pierced embrasures, spades and pickaxes strewn about in corners. "Ah! Monsieur," cries an *ouvrier*, "what's the use of all this without 'la République?' 'Tis useless: we are betrayed. Live under Badinguet or the Roi Guillaume, what difference is it to us—'tis



only a difference of masters. Defend Paris? defend the property of the rich? A quoi bon? I don't see much good to us in that. Vive la République!"

Meanwhile Paris—that part, I mean, of Paris which struts between the Boulevard Montmartre and the Grand Hôtel, and of which numerous specimens have, no doubt, come to the surface again in Regent Street, and that other part which vegetates between the Faubourg St. Honoré and Quartier St. Antoine,—Paris had surrendered to the charms of the Chinese Dragon, Cousin Montauban de Palikao. The *Gaulois*, *Figaro*, *Paris-Journal*, and all that portion of the Parisian press which is ever ready to kiss a pair of gilt spurs on a pair of military boots, set to work to make matters straight, danced, and howled, and shrieked at the Prussians by way of reviving the patriotism of the boulevards, soothed Parisian susceptibility, explained away defeat, reviled Ollivier and Lebœuf, and held out promises of speedy triumph and revenge with Montauban in Paris and Bazaine at Metz. Day by day we watched the progress of the fortifications; but all this preparation was slow and dilatory, and conveyed an impression of unreality. The new Ministry pampered our fond illusions, revived our drooping confidence with skilfully-drugged telegrams and ingenious compounds of truth and falsehood. We lingered on in this state of somnolence till General Trochu's appointment to the Gover-

norship of Paris. Thenceforth, each official bulletin which made matters right at Metz was confronted by some paper of Trochu's, conveying intimation of impending danger to the capital. Trochu and Palikao acted towards each other and towards us, respectively, the parts of Doctor Tant-Pis and Doctor Tant-Mieux—of course we gave the preference to Doctor Tant-Mieux and his physic. Physician Tant-Mieux prescribed confidence, doled out victory in small doses, spoke mysteriously of "plans"—we always believed in "plans;" Physician Tant-Pis shook his head, looked grave, prescribed fortifications, earthworks, huge naval guns, gave orders to level houses, and razed the Bois de Boulogne.

Sunday the fourth of September came—I shall not attempt to describe the tumultuous scenes of the preceding night, for one good reason—I did not witness them; but morning came, a grey dull morning, solemn and un-Parisian, even news-boys hushed with creation into silence on this side—the left, or *rive gauche* of the Seine. At the Mairie of St. Sulpice, I find the crowd silently scanning the dismal tidings of the night. "*Forty Thousand Prisoners. The Emperor Captured in the Fight.*" These last words a workman fiercely thumbs: "They've got him, so much the better, let them only keep him." We pause before Trochu's and the Cabinet's rival proclamations, both

printed on governmental white paper, pasted in text-and-commentary fashion—regardless of each other as text and commentary are sometimes apt to be—on the same two yards of wall, both equally expressive in their silence, unmeaning in their speech. A patriot swears he will “shoulder his musket and march off with his landlord; but first, a clean sweep must be made of priests and seminarists, *calotins* all.”

Unusual quiet pervaded the Place du Carrousel. The tricolour drooped heavily from its flag-staff on that misconceived Bourbonnesque dome which mars the beauty of the Tuileries. Some few stragglers were peering listlessly through the gratings at the Palace before them. Files of private carriages and hackney-coaches wait in ominous attendance at the door. *Turba medicorum*. What an alarming host of physicians in consultation about the dynasty!

Unmistakable signs of dissolution appear in the peculiar calm which prevails along the Rue de Rivoli, and on the Place de la Concorde. Crowns and garlands of flowers—silent epigrams—deck the statue of the City of Strasburg—“the city which has not surrendered.” Men converse in monosyllables. Now and then a few words catch the ear: it is generally understood that the National Guard, *i. e.*, the People in its Sunday-best, is to meet at noon by appointment on the Place of Concord. The Legislature meets at one, to

deliberate within call of the "Sovereign People" upon Jules Favre's motion of *Déchéance*. The "Sovereign's" way to the Chamber lies across that bridge; in front of it Monsieur Palikao has drawn up a double file of mounted gendarmes, whose yellow belts and glittering sabres look pictorial.

\* \* \* \* \*

I chanced to spend the next eventful three or four hours at the ambulance of the Palais de l'Industrie, in utter ignorance of what was going on within ten minutes' walk. A wounded man was brought in from the Place du Carrousel; he had been trying to break a stone eagle off one of the palace statues, and the eagle had contused his pate. The doctors were expecting to see him transferred from their hands to the keeping of the police. Sergens de ville strutted about in nooks and corners of the building, fussy and important as was their wont. Towards four we left the "Palace," quite unprepared for the view which the Champs Elysées presented. The avenue seemed to glow with life and colour. Sunshine, and ladies, and gay dresses: the flutter, and freshness, and gala of a Parisian Sunday afternoon. Yet the morning had been so gloomy! I remember Gustave Flaubert's inimitable description of the young Republic of '48 sunning itself in the streets of Paris. Yes, 'tis the Republic. To convince myself of the fact, I glance at

the Pont de la Concorde, guarded by gendarmes at noon. The gendarmes had parted on either side, and the crowd went freely to and fro on the bridge. I looked in the direction of the Tuileries and saw no flag. What need of further proof? As one moved up the boulevards, the scene increased in interest. Extemporised battalions of National Guardsmen bristled at every turn and poured in from every quarter: a medley of uniforms and blouses, képis, Tyrolese hats, round hats, hats of all descriptions. Drums were beating and bayonets bristled. As we pass they challenge us with shouts of "Vive la République." We satisfy them as to our republicanism by taking off hats, and pass on. Every third man you meet sports a green bough or a cockade, red, white, and blue. Cockades are selling like flowers at a race-course. Paris is costuming herself "en République." Respectable citizens are giving an airing to their wives and daughters. Strangers shake hands and kiss. "Nous sommes en famille, n'est-ce pas?" Tears there were, of course, and sentiment: our Gallic fountains of sensibility gush freely on such occasions. How suddenly does everything *Imperial* vanish from shop-fronts and windows! Here is Dusautoy, Imperial Tailor, who remains a tailor, but ceases to be Imperial. There is the Théâtre Impérial de l'Opéra Comique. A citizen in shirt-sleeves is hammering down the large

gilt capitals which combine to form the word "Impérial." The last I saw of Cæsar was a gilt plaster medal—some international reward for "superior" pickles or still better mustard. A vivacious National Guardsman bore it aloft in triumph at the point of his bayonet. The crowd looks on, laughs, chatters, and admires. Sergens de ville present the hilts of their rapiers in token of submission, sneak past Cæsar's effigy, and dive down narrow by-streets. Meantime busy politicians exchange the latest on-dits at corners. "What news from the Hôtel de Ville? What is the last Government proclaimed? The latest list? Gambetta, Favre, Rochefort . . . . No Rochefort, Pelletan, Favre, Trochu . . . . Trochu, Favre, Gambetta."

And Sedan! who remembered Sedan? Palikao's proclamation was still fresh upon our walls, beginning with the ominous words, "Un grand *Malheur*;" but we read "*Bonheur*," and substitute in pencil our reading of Palikao's text. Paris was basking in her brief holiday-sunshine. Eating, drinking and feasting went on in democratic taverns, where moblots, linesmen, and white blouses fraternized over a litre of "petit bleu." A citizen, "overcome by his feelings," staggers up to a sentry on guard, and explains to him "that we are brothers, and free, and—Vive la République." Sentry shrugs his shoulders and looks puzzled. "Fourthsof-September" are indeed a puzzle—to sentries and

respectable people. Yet, with all sympathizing observers, one deep impression must have prevailed : astonishment at the newness and elasticity of emotion which Paris still preserved in her most *Byzantin* days. In a moment she had thrown off from mind and memory the dismal platitude of what called itself a reign ; she woke with child-like freshness and delight to the morning of a new life. Poor convalescent Paris—toying with her Republic of a day, unmindful of advancing hosts and heavy pedantry of politics and war. Had she not, in proclaiming a Republic, decreed Utopia ? Next day we were to wake to the evil routine of human things. Laugh at our faculty for living in fool's paradises ; but confess that it was our strength as well as our weakness, and that it helped us, beyond expectation, through the siege. Luckily, our fools' paradise was large enough to contain two millions of us. "How will restless Paris bear seclusion ?" the world asked. The answer is, that our civilized vices and weaknesses found food and solace in such large company. Paris shut out from Society ! That could not be the view of Paris : Society was shut out from us. The world beyond our ramparts—bah ! Provincial ! The forts which encircle and protect us—Provincial ! Like true Parisians, we persistently ignored the geography of our own environs—Provincial !

That is how we "simmered in our own gravy."

The next few days were stormy, explosive, dangerous. Ambition disappointed flamed forth in scarlet manifestos. The *Marseillaise* denounced the new Government as "reactionary ;" and Rochefort, editor of the *Marseillaise* and member of the Government, was placed between both parties in the ambiguous position of a mediator : at his request the *Marseillaise* suspended its publication. Cluseret, the "red General" and would-be candidate for the governorship of Paris, betook himself to Lyons ; and Belleville lost its confidence in Rochefort and Gambetta.

The middle-classes, inclined to optimism by natural sluggishness of temper, had fondly fancied that the republic, proclaimed on Sunday, would by the mere fact of its proclamations, by some magic, peaceful influence, arrest the onward progress of the German armies. Now, panic-stricken, they discovered that the Republic "was no solution" to their difficulties. They saw the Government divided in its counsels. "War to the Knife," cry Gambetta and his adherents ; while Favre, the tender-hearted, indites a lamb-like, deprecating circular, and Trochu prepares, despondingly, for the defence of Paris.

Signs of general unpreparedness and disorganization were but too manifest. Disorganization—a fatal word in France, the "*saute qui peut*" and death of individual energy. With the exception of a few



Roman regiments, the rest were hastily-assembled masses of re-called veterans and untrained recruits; each class of which retained its own original defects, while each failed to find in the other the support and stimulus necessary for developing special qualities of its own. Discipline, corrupted by the Imperial system, shattered by a series of unparalleled disasters, had well-nigh collapsed in the fortnight that followed the revolution of September. Republican enthusiasm is no doubt a fine theme for speculative believers in the power of political changes to moralize large agglomerations of uneducated men; but to the soldiery at large, Republic seemed synonymous with liberty to get drunk, knock in after hours, abuse officers and disobey rules and regulations to the cry of "vive la République !" Unseemly panic prevailed amongst the upper classes. There was fear of the everlasting "red spectre"—fear of anarchy and pillage—fear of Guillotine—fear of Belleville in arms—armed with breech-loaders, too!—Keep the breech-loaders for the "*épiciers* !" "Brown Bess" is good enough, too good, indeed, for Belleville and the faubourgs. Social uneasiness and distrust are at their height; husbands part with their wives, fathers with their daughters; the general exodus of the rich adds to the consternation of those who remain behind. Sword-sticks are selling everywhere in the most public manner, and each man arms himself against his neigh-

bour. *My* neighbour is an energetic Friend of Order, *tout ce qu'il y a de plus ami de l'ordre*, a Commissioner in the Navy and thorough-paced official. The mere name of Republic sends a shiver through his frame; we avoid it in conversation, to spare each other's feelings. He proposes that we two should patrol at night in our avenue with loaded revolvers. Next morning, I see him from my window offering bribes of cigars and wine to soldiers encamped before our door; I hear him address them as "Citizens," and call upon them to make an heroic defence of the Republic. We fear the Prussians, but oh! we fear our defenders. Which do we fear most? Perhaps, on the whole, our defenders, since they are nearest, while the Prussians are as yet at six days' distance. Possibly, as they approach, we may fear them more. The French proverb says, "that one nail drives another out;" and a "complete assortment" of all possible varieties of fear may supply specific antidotes against each severally in turn.

How anxious we—I mean "friends of order" like myself and my neighbour *au troisième*—are secretly for peace, the Public Funds can testify. They rise, like quicksilver, to Jules Favre's Circular. Yet Favre has declared that he will neither yield "an inch nor a stone." But, then, we comfort ourselves in true Parisian fashion with various and conflicting hypotheses.

Europe will not stand by and witness our dismemberment; America has already promised her support and a hundred thousand men—this we have on grave authority, it comes straight from the Boulevards, and is endorsed by *Figaro*; and Russia—we always had a weakness for Russia; her recollections of the Crimean War and Malakoff must make her feel so anxious to fly to our rescue—Russia is on the point of marching an army into Silesia. Peace was uppermost in all our thoughts, but we dared not utter them for fear of what Belleville might not do. A wholesome terror is Belleville to wavering patriots behind their counters. The democratic clubs incited the working classes to resistance and interested them in the defence of Paris by appealing to their republican aspirations. Mainly, under the influence of the International Society, an extensive system of miniature “Committees of Defence” sprang up in the twenty arrondissements or sections of the capital. These self-appointed committees were to act as a kind of sub-Government to the Government presided over by General Trochu; to keep a jealous watch over its deliberations, and guard it from the enervating influence of the bourgeoisie—to superintend municipal administration, inquire into matters relating to military organization, and generally to protect and assert against all comers the interest of the Republic Democratic and Social. United in one central group

they formed, in fact, the nucleus of a Revolutionary Government in embryo, ready at a given moment to start into existence and impose itself under the name of a *Commune* on 300,000 dumbfounded constituents.

A wonderful ant-world is Paris, when of a sudden its fertile powers of ingenious industry are diverted from their ordinary channels to the creation of new schemes of government. *Fervet opus*: each group of human ants is busy with its own scheme, tugging its own grain of corn along paths which cross and intersect each other—yet each group remains absorbed in its own work, sublimely unconscious of its neighbour's; finally, at much pains and with much ingenuity, the grain of corn is landed in some corner where a pebble stops it—and there's an end of all our toils and speculations. This phase of Parisian life was curiously expressed in clubs and popular meetings: from the first it aroused my interest, and I endeavoured to fix my impressions of the moment in a Diary which I now proceed to reproduce in fragments.

*Wednesday, Sept. 7.*—Yesterday, I met one of my oldest friends of the “Café de Madrid”—a staunch believer in Utopia.\* We had not seen each other since the Empire, and now we fraternised as Republicans.—

\* M. J. Andrieu, since a member of the Commune and Minister of Public Works.

"Come with me to-night," he said mysteriously, and you shall see what work is being done. Let kings beware and tremble, there's mischief brewing for them." I trembled, being of a peaceful nature, but accepted a "rendezvous" for the evening. We met on the stroke of eight, in silence as befits conspirators; walked arm-in-arm through crowded thoroughfares and boulevards—then dived into a narrow lane, ascended a narrow dingy staircase in a dingy dwelling, and found ourselves on the third floor, scraping our heels at the door of the "Federal Chamber." We enter a low-ceilinged, dimly-lighted room, smelling of petroleum and tobacco, and plunge into the midst of a group of gesticulating citizens, whose pose and pantomime reminded me of a chorus of *figurants* rehearsing a scene in a conspiracy. I expected to pass through some horrible ordeal, but, to my disappointment, the "Citizens" were satisfied with an ordinary introduction. The Federal Chamber held conference a while and then proceeded to take itself downstairs. We followed it out of doors and dispersed in separate groups, each of which took a different direction. My friend and I joined one, and after going through a number of lanes and by-streets, we came at last to a long ground-floor room lit up with gas, from whence issued a buzz of many voices; and on enter-

ing, we found ourselves amidst a throng of blouses, white and blue, mechanics, masons and working-men of all descriptions. My companions made their way up to the platform and exchanged short whispers with the chairman and speakers—all of them workmen. These last started ever and anon upon their legs to deliver themselves of impromptu harangues, more patriotic than coherent. Resolutions were proposed and carried “in the name of the Sovereign People,” who desired, or was supposed to desire, that “Committees of Vigilance” should be appointed in every section for the purpose of stimulating the mayors to action and exercising inquisitorial supervision in all matters pertaining to the safety of the Commonwealth. While resolutions are being passed, people laugh and chat and make merry at the expense of the mover, allow him to exhaust himself in attempts at eloquence, as a rule don’t listen to him, but applaud him when he waits for their applause, and approve with touching unanimity measures which they do not understand. One resolution achieved a real success; it was to the effect that the Government should declare all labour suspended and subsidize the working-men enrolled as National Guards in the defence of their country. The Sovereign People looked pleased at this and held up all its hands with great alacrity.

This vote was hardly taken, when a tailor, with a great head of yellow hair standing up like a mop, rushed breathless to the platform. "Citizens," he cried, "'tis useless to disguise the fact,—the people are deceived. Nay, don't look incredulous : I tell you, ye are sold, ye are betrayed."—"Oui, oui," groans the assembly, "we are sold, we are betrayed."—"Yes, citizens, while we are here engaged in taking measures for the safety of the Commonwealth, *La Réaction* is already raising her viper's head. Citizens, I have seen with my own eyes the Municipal Guard, the hired soldiers of Bonaparte, keep watch at the gates of the Palace of Justice."—A low murmur ran through the assembly.—"Do you doubt the truth of what I say?" resumes the speaker. "Then appoint delegates, honest men, who shall enquire into the facts, and send them off at once to the Palace of Justice. Time presses, and not a moment is to be lost if you would save the Republic." Five "delegates" were instantly chosen, who started on their mission to the palace. Thereupon a volley of denunciations was poured from the tribune. One speaker had seen 80,000 Chassepots packed in bundles of straw at the railway-station, left there no doubt by traitors to be forwarded to the Prussians. My friend refrained from speaking, but, clenching my arm, whispered that he

too had a tale to tell which would make men tremble to hear: "The Orleans princes were in possession of a private key to the Tuileries, and had access to the secret chambers of the palace." To feel oneself in the confidence of such a weighty secret and not cast it like an explosive bombshell in the midst of the assembly—then stand aside and watch the ludicrous effects of the explosion upon the countless "Jules"—was for most men no ordinary trial of their powers of self-restraint: luckily, my heart failed me at the critical moment. The "Sovereign People," having now partially recovered from its panic, began to discuss and draw up lists of members for the committee of its own section. Each speaker proposed a list of his own, in which he took care to include himself. At last, by mutual compromise, a list was agreed to and put to the vote; but as the great majority of the names were unknown to the assembly, an ingenious suggestion was made that each candidate should come forward on the platform, stand there five minutes to be inspected, and be taken like a wife by looks. The candidates came forward, put on their most winning looks, attempted speeches, as a rule didn't get further than "Citoyens"—thumped their patriotic breasts, and were helped out of their attempts at eloquence by the assembly's declaring that "oratory



was no requisite, that we had enough of lawyers and wanted men of action." So the whole affair was a dumb-show and the list was carried by acclamation. Just at this moment the door opened to let in the five "delegates" fresh from the Palais du Justice, or from some neighbouring tavern, where they had stopped to refresh their patriotism on the way. They returned with the intelligence that the soldiers of Bonaparte did indeed mount guard at the gates of the Palace; but the "Gugustes" and "Polytes"\* were too much amused with the beaming countenances of the candidates on the platform to have much attention left for Bonaparte or his soldiers. The last thing I remained to see was a subscription to defray the expense of printing an address to the German armies. This paper was drawn up in the name of the International Society, who called upon their "German brethren" in the ranks of the invading host, to retrace their steps across the Rhine. A difficulty suggested itself as to how this address was to find its way to the German "brethren;" but a Franc-tireur volunteered to paste it on the walls of the villages on the Prussian line of march.

Let "Guguste" at his club crown with undreamt-of

\* "Guguste" and "Polyte," short for Auguste or Gustave and Hippolyte:—the typical name for the "young blood" of the Faubourgs.

beauties the social edifice last crowned at Sedan—let Arago (Étienne), ex-broken-down play-writer, reviving in the character of “Mayor of Paris,” wield hammer and tarbrush to republicanize Imperial streets and buildings with stage mottoes of “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,” and the like—leave Cant and Utopy, and descend to prose. We turn to the forts and ramparts, where with heavy haste continues the stern work of war. Earthworks are being thrown up on the heights of Chatillon and Montretout, and elsewhere, to complete the original line of defence at its most vulnerable points; but the workmen waste the sunny hours in country “guingettes,” where they carouse with soldiers. A dusty gloom has settled over Paris, crowds cluster round each “Mairie,” panting for the latest news. “Uhlans! Uhlans!” on they come, riding through the woods of Fontainebleau. Through the valleys of the Oise, the Seine, the Marne, down pour the sweeping hosts:—“They are at Compiègne, they are at Méhun, they are at Meaux.” On our wide streets and avenues the eye met nothing but files of provincial Mobiles at drill—raw peasants in their blouses, who looked dolefully at their percussion muskets, and still more dolefully at us Parisians. From Normandy, from Brittany, from Burgundy, from all parts of France, they came pouring in by trainfulls. At the stations, a crowd of questioners would gather round them to enquire,

"What news from the provinces? and what is thought of the Republic?" "La République" would only draw a shrug from these provincial Mobiles, who seemed to have enough of Paris and its republics, and were only thinking of their village sweethearts, and country homes, left behind at the mercy of the Prussians.

Great activity was displayed in clothing, equipping, and arming the new battalions of the National Guard with what weapons were at hand—the cast-off percussion muskets of the Mobiles, who suddenly appeared with Chassepots; but what most engrossed the attention of the National Guards, was the election of their officers. These elections were usually decided at the nearest tavern, with the help of unlimited petits-verres of absinthe and rum. The officers were chosen for their "republicanism," *i.e.*, for the number of days, weeks, or months, they had spent in prison, for political or other offences, under the Empire. Mégy, a workman, who had shot a policeman, was made a lieutenant. The Mobiles of the Seine were told off to man the forts; but their gay life at Châlons had ill-prepared them for the stern discipline of war. Composed as they were in greater part of the wildest youths of the faubourgs, they set aside all military restraint, and broke out into extravagant follies; they invaded nunneries and convents at Villejuif, dressed up in nun's clothes and ecclesiastical gar-

ments, spent their nights in childish revelry, ran riot in the villages, and swore they would show a clean pair of heels whenever the Prussians came. The army seemed hopelessly demoralized, with the exception of the sailors, awaiting coolly in their "ships," as they styled the forts, the enemy's attack. Day by day, and almost hour by hour, the first cannon-shot was expected. The flag-staffs of the forts were exchanging rapid signals with the Triumphal Arch and the Ministry of Marine. From the heights of Bicêtre you could see patches of dull brown smoke blurring the horizon here and there as far as the eye could reach; these were fires in the surrounding woods, which the French engineers made vain attempts to kindle. Now and then a distant explosion came booming from the distance; and young officers would nervously twitch their eye-glass. No, it is not yet the sound of cannon, it was only an explosion of some railway-bridge; and men would gloomily relapse into the routine of weary and endless preparations. Beneath our feet lay Paris, under a cloud of dust hovering around her tall roofs and spires; and, as you entered by the drawbridge, you realized in one glance the miseries of her preparations for the siege. Files of peasants' carts and country vehicles, crammed with tables, chairs, crockery-ware, cabbages, garden-tools, pet cats, and children, blocked up the narrow passage in the lunette before the gate.

"*They* are coming, *they* are come!" was in everybody's mouth.

This was, indeed, the most trying moment for the temper of a people so feverish, so fitful, so femininely impatient of suspense, severed from all its pleasures and startled, as if awakening from a dream, by the hollowness of its own existence. But now the great concert of artists, poets, philosophers, with all the minor fiddles of the press, swelled in full chorus to soothe our agonies of silence. The Place de la Concorde, with its great memories of the past, became the centre of Parisian life, and, as it were, a kind of open-air patriotic theatre, in which Parisians felt the double charm of being both actor and spectator. The walls blushed with proclamations of many colours; scarlet, magenta, rose-pink, lilac, for Republicans of different hues; with dull, old-maidish green for Positivists, and Government white paper, on which speak the sages, and lord of multitudes, Hugo, the poet-king, striking the Pindaric lyre with burning minstrel fingers.

"Let the land flame and kindle, let the woods roar and thunder; peal forth church-bells — tocsin! tocsin! from each house let a soldier sally, let each suburb become a regiment, the town become an army. . . . March Lyons, and take thy musket; Bordeaux, take thy carbine; Rouen, draw thy sword; and thou, Marseilles, sing thy dread song, and come in thy ter-

rible might. . . . Roll down great rocks, pile up the paving-stones of the streets, turn ploughshares into swords, take in your hands the stones of our holy land, stone the invaders with the bones of our mother France. . . . Let the streets of the cities devour the foe, let the tombs cry out; behind each wall let God and the people be felt, let flames shoot out from the earth, and each tuft of heather become a burning bush. And as for Europe, what is she to us? Let her look on, if she has eyes to see."

Well had it been for Paris if she could have remained content with such artistic expression of patriotic feeling. Unfortunately, the ridiculous usurped on the sublime. The statue of Strasburg soon became grotesque with her shapeless *coiffure* of wreaths and garlands; the gamin performed his tumbles about her arms and hips; excited old gentlemen mounted on the pedestal, endeavouring to gain an audience: there was *Figaro*, too, with his tribute of praise, proposing to confer on the idol the cross of the Legion of Honour. Paris is in the feverish state of a man about to fight a duel: we puff at our cigar, flourish riding-whips, tipple liqueurs, look at ourselves in the glass, and ask our seconds "if they ever saw us so cool." M. Alfred Assollant, a writer in the *Paris Journal*, is ready with the answer. "I hardly know whether I shall be believed, but Paris never was so cheerful as to-day."

We are impatient of silence, it kills our courage, we must make a noise, move about, appear to be doing something. When soldiers feel the death-qualm come over them, they empty their cartridge-boxes at imaginary foes; and we fire off whole volleys of abuse. "We shall burn Paris, we shall blow it up. The catacombs are mined, and Paris shall be the grave of her enemies." Couple with this our strong conviction of our own invincibility, our sanguineness of hope, our short and easy method of explaining away defeat to our own advantage, our belief in changing of names, in prestige, and prestidigitation. By the great mass the Republic has been accepted as the *Deus ex machinâ* of victory. It is not France, but the Empire, that has suffered defeat; but now, "nous avons changé tout cela;" our armies are republican, and we make a fresh start. We live fast, and our imagination is quick to colour men and things alike in the hues of our newest fancies: a patch of rouge here, and a puff of powder there, and Paris appears in a new character,—her siege-toilet completed, her Phrygian bonnet cocked resolutely on one side—waiting for the foe, and counting the minutes on the clock.

## CHAPTER II.

## HOW WE "SIMMERED IN OUR OWN GRAVY."

*Tuesday, September 20th.*—Yesterday, we heard in our quiet avenue the first authentic peal of cannon, so long and anxiously expected. Reports of fighting in the direction of Clamart were in circulation all the morning. A little before noon we saw the cuirassiers returning, at a slow pace, to their quarters in the Champ de Mars. We looked in vain amongst them for traces of the fight, as they sat their well-groomed chargers with the supreme indifference of old troopers—their bright helmets and cuirasses glittering quite new in the sunshine. But the sight was soon to change. A crowd of fugitives came pouring down the main avenues which lead from Montrouge and Chatillon to the quarters of the left bank. Mingled with them, in wild confusion, a troop of mounted gendarmes dashed furiously through a long train of military carts and ambulance-waggons filled with wounded men; they spurred onwards to arrest the flight of the infantry,



themselves joining in the general flight. Disbanded Zouaves were explaining to the people, with much gesticulation, how they had "retreated"—not from want of courage, that was simply impossible, but because they had fallen short of ammunition; and some had the barefacedness to show their cartridge-boxes, which, on closer examination, generally proved to be quite full. Young Linesmen held forth to crowds of compassionating women; all told one tale: "*Nous sommes trahis*; Trochu has led us to the slaughter. The Prussians have taken our mitrailleuses; they will be in to-night; the Fort of Vanves is going to be blown up." "Poor things," the women would say, with the unlimited pity of the female heart, and they would straightway supply the betrayed heroes with all manner of food and drink. But National Guards come up blustering and march off poor Dumanet to the nearest guard-house. Some of the fugitives are said to have given away their cartridges, and even their rifles to ruffians from the faubourgs, who, certainly, do not intend to use them against the Prussians. The lower classes are singularly keen in improving each opportunity to arm themselves against society. Towards three o'clock, on the Boulevard St. Michel, the panic seemed to have reached its height, when a long file of artillery-caissons came clattering down

from Chatillon, where the guns, some seven or eight in number, had been abandoned to the enemy. The boulevard was crowded with groups of people eager to catch and magnify each floating rumour, who gathered round the artillerymen and bewildered them with questions about the results of the fight. It was almost unsafe to mix amongst them ; for if they fancied one to betray an anxiety for precise and correct information, they instantly suspected you of being a Uhlan in plain clothes, and, before long, men would detect a smack of foreign accent in your speech. Nor did the panic remain confined to the mob : our novices in power seemed to have lost their heads at the first sound of cannon, like landsmen in a storm. A friend, who met Gambetta in the street yesterday afternoon, has reported that he found the young Minister in a state of wild excitement, which he gave vent to by repeating several times over : "Je vous dis que ces b . . . là"—he meant the Prussians—"sont à La Porte Maillot." The most painful sight by far to witness was the general retreat of Ducrot's corps d'armée, which lasted for many hours of the night. We heard their heavy tramp as they came down our avenue, hungry, tired, footsore, and crest-fallen, followed by dismal-looking carts which contained numbers of wounded lying like half-slaughtered cattle on litters of blood-

stained straw. The inhabitants would creep out of their houses and stand in the doorways, or get out of their beds and peep out from behind the window-curtains in their eagerness to catch a glimpse of these half-veiled horrors, which mystery seemed only to make more horribly attractive.

However, it is some relief to see that the morning sun has not forgotten to shine upon us, that Paris still remains true to her own nature, bright, beautiful, careless, and unmindful as ever; and now, perhaps, since we have slept over our first troubles, the siege may begin to afford matter for curiosity, especially if the weather continues fine. We intend to go, this afternoon, to the Trocadero. A lady who lives in our house tells us that the view from the heights of the Trocadero is splendid, and that an immense crowd gathered there yesterday to watch the battle raging on the opposite ridge of Chatillon and Clamart, at some four or five miles' distance. "She didn't see any Prussians," for these barbarians are perversely fond of hiding; but perhaps they may treat us this afternoon to a glimpse of their helmets.

*Thursday, 22nd September.*—On Tuesday, rumours of negociation began to be widely spread. M. Ernest Picard's paper, the *Electeur Libre*, had, with deliberate indiscretion, revealed the secret of Jules Favre's visit to Ferrières; and already an armistice

was spoken of as a certainty. Yet, from the inauspicious silence observed by the Government, it was clear that great obstacles were in the way, and the attitude of the Reds grew more and more threatening. To satisfy them, the Government repeated the stereotyped formula, "Not an inch, not a stone," &c., as the ultimatum of its policy; and Gambetta issued patriotic proclamations, in which he invoked the republican memories of the 21st September, 1792, and called upon us to show ourselves worthy of the names of Danton and Vergniaud. The National Guard respond to the appeal by parading through the Place de la Concorde, where they present arms to the City of Strasburg; then, after showering upon the idol fresh sprigs of immortelles, they march in deep columns to the sound of the drum, with banners flying, upon the Hôtel de Ville, where they "manifest" against peace. Presently, Gambetta appears in the portal, and puts forth the powers of his eloquence; Mayor Arago, content to play second fiddle where he cannot play first, swears inaudibly in a corner that "so long as he lives, no Prussian foe shall desecrate the Town-hall of Paris with his presence." Jules Favre returned from Ferrières on Tuesday, was busy drawing up an official report of his interview with the Federal Chancellor, and we prepared ourselves for a piece of

his most academical eloquence, which would take at least three days to compose and three hours to read. To-day, the long expected paper saw the light in the columns of the *Official Journal*, and roused a storm of indignation. The Reds are very angry with Jules Favre for having wept, but this commends him to the middle classes. However, all are agreed upon one point,—that peace is impossible with such Vandals as Monsieur de Bismarck and his royal master, whose pride we punish by the additional clause: “Pas un sou de nôtre trésor,” affixed to our programme of unconditional defiance. Paris takes up her final attitude of resistance, and settles down deliberately to the “heroic folly” of a siege.

*Friday, 23rd Sept.*—Victory! we have heard all through the morning the roar of our southern guns at play; and now the news spreads like wild-fire through the streets. We have slain 20,000 Prussians, or thereabouts: 30,000 of them are actually surrounded: they have been summoned to surrender, but are perverse, and refuse—a few more turns of the mitrailleuse will bring them to their senses: no mercy for those “barbarian hordes”—remember what language the Vandal Bismarck held to Jules Favre. We make fine havoc with our enemies on the boulevards; the figure of their slain is multi-

plied by thousands—first twenty, then thirty, then sixty thousand killed—we are satisfied with 15,000 prisoners. Somebody ventured to ask where these prisoners had been stowed away. "Monsieur, I tell you they were brought in at dusk to avoid a demonstration, and they are hidden in the barracks of the École Militaire." A soberer gentleman exhorts us to be calm, and to preserve the dignity which befits conquerors: he knows from good authority that the day has been an excellent one, and that General Vinoy came back with a smile on his countenance. We calculate how many prisoners it would require to make the old warrior's features relax into a smile; and then, as the cafés close at half-past ten by order of Count de Kératry, Prefect of Police, and the theatres are shut for fear of bombardment, we make one more "tour des boulevards," and go to bed—our last refuge against monotony.

*Sunday, 25th Sept.*—We have had three days' "manifesting," one day's victory, seven days' siege; perhaps we deserve our "*dimanche*." The weather is so wonderfully fine it makes one forget the Prussians, who will, no doubt, retaliate by forgetting us—such is their respect for the Sabbath. Besides, the siege has already lasted a week, and that is a long time for anything to occupy the thoughts of a Parisian. We cannot always be talking of bombardments, of

blowing ourselves up, and making Paris the grave of her enemies, until we convert it into a charnel-house or sepulchre ; the best thing, meanwhile, is to make of it as pleasant a place as the Prussians and Belleville will permit. It was, indeed, at first, a strange sensation to receive no letters from the dear absent ones ; but then, no evil is unmingled with a grain of comfort ; a little silence and a little absence do not always mar the happiness of a Parisian *ménage*. Besides, Parisians have a wonderful gift of resignation : 'tis the *summum bonum* of their philosophy. By this time it is an universally accepted fact that we cannot step outside our walls. The last attempt to get away to the country was made, I believe, by an ingenious old lady who inquired for the omnibus to Ville d'Avray, and was greatly shocked to hear that Ville d'Avray was "la Prusse," and that she would be shot if she tried to get there.

The prospect of bombardment makes us feel at times uneasy—especially us peaceful inhabitants of the southern bank, who know ourselves to be within easy range of Chatillon—but what is gained by making life miserable ? If we were to sit in sack-cloth on this side of the river, the people on the other side would none the less enjoy their Sunday afternoon in the Champs Elysées. Besides, have we

not taken proper and wholesome precautions against this much-dreaded bombardment? In every court-yard I see a little heap of sand, and two diminutive cans of water on every staircase. I make inquiry about all this warlike preparation of Madame la Concierge. "Ah! Monsieur," replies this worthy official, pausing awhile from the labours of the broom, "the Government has told us to put sand in the court-yard, and pails of water on the landing, and there they are, and we are quite safe now." Let us hope so. Other preparations, somewhat different in character, have been made to meet the dangers of this bombardment. Every fourth or fifth house sports a small white flag with the red cross of Geneva; but great would be the simplicity of a wounded man who, putting his trust in the flag, should apply at the door for a bed; sooner or later, according to his intelligence, he would discover that the red cross has been adopted as a talisman against Prussian shells. Thy power, Charity, is wonderful to cover a multitude of sins; who can tell how much poltroonery, how much pretentious fussiness and petty larceny thou clothest in fair disguise, and—I tremble to say—how many flirtations nestle in thy service! Too many "*belles dames*" have enlisted in the ambulances, and, in their black dresses with the Geneva badge on the arm, they look what the



English fair describe as "so becoming," and what *Parisiennes* call "so interesting."

The Triumphal Arch, together with the railway-bridge of Auteuil, is become our favourite resort. I went there this afternoon with the crowd, and we remained there for hours examining the fortress of Mont Valérien through opera-glasses, and wondering whether we should see the white smoke suddenly curl around its summit. "I do wish *they* would attack or bombard or do something," said a fair lady to her "Adolphe." "Really, mon cher"—and the beauty yawned—"it is becoming rather dull." Of course our patriotism sustains us; but Parisians cannot live on sentiment alone. We console ourselves with the reflection that the Prussians are afraid of us ever since they have heard of our last week's manifestations, and that they are repenting at leisure of their mistake in besieging Paris. I suggest to a friend that they may possibly intend to starve us out, which we are doing nothing to prevent; but of course I am put down for a "Pessimist." Methinks the "Pessimists," as we call them, have changed sides within the last week or so. "Joseph Prudhomme," that typical representative of bread-and-butter respectability, who the other day was ready for peace at any price rather than endure a siege, is so delighted at having made the discovery,

first, that he can do without "Madame Prudhomme," his spouse, whom the good soul fondly imagines to be quite safe in the country beyond the reach of Uhlans,—and secondly, that he can hold a gun in his hands and mount guard with it :—in a word, he is so enraptured with the proofs of his valour, which he displays by night at the ramparts and retails by day to his customers, that he is actually developed into a full-blown hero, and he proudly talks of Paris being impregnable. Belleville, which really cowed the worthy "Prud'homme" into valour, is less confident; for Belleville has to complain of the Government. Félix Pyat demands the Commune, and he will not be refused. Blanqui and the clubs insist on a general perquisition in the houses and cellars of the "rich," so that all private stores may be made available for the sustenance of the "patriots;" but this "offends all notions of Political Economy." A pity for Political Economy that such things as sieges do exist to interfere with its precepts! The butchers seem a great deal more orthodox in these matters: if they had their own way, the law of Supply and Demand would work splendidly to our destruction. Even as it is, in spite of government tariffs and regulations, it is almost impossible to find meat anywhere. This does not mean, of course, that meat is not to be had at the butcher's: only

you must not go in at the door,—where a National Guardsman threatens to transfix you with his bayonet, unless you fall back and take your turn in the hungry *queue*,—but make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the mysteries of a certain private entrance next door, and a certain screen, from behind which “*madame la bouchère*” peeps out “between the sunshine and the rain,” and bestows her smiles and mutton-cutlets on her privileged customers. The knowledge of this exasperates the people, who clamour for stern, uncompromising equality; but the Government seems as yet undecided about rationing the meat. Horseflesh is eagerly bought up in the public markets; the *filet* or choicest part is reserved for the tables of Messieurs the Rich, whose iniquities are beyond conception. Perhaps the prejudice against horseflesh is more noticeable among the poorer classes; but, on the whole, the mass takes quite naturally to this kind of meat. There is some vague mention of cats and rats; but those who indulge already in such anticipations of the future are for the most part cockneyfied *blasés* and *dilettanti*, who will continue to enjoy their luxuries till the last day of the siege, but are smitten with a precocious desire to make themselves historical.

The spy-fever has somewhat cooled down; but it is

still unsafe, particularly if you chance to live on a fourth or fifth story, to read a novel in bed by the light of a lamp with a green-coloured shade ; for the chances are that, before you have got as far as the description of the heroine, a band of National Guardsmen will burst into the room, drag you out of bed, and accuse you of being a spy and corresponding with the Prussians by means of coloured signals. I had myself a narrow escape the other day when I strolled up the hill of Montmartre to enjoy the view of the surrounding country. A taste for scenery creates suspicion in the patriotic breast, especially at Montmartre ; and before I had been many minutes watching the sunshine on the hills, a citizen came up and said he should like to know where "monsieur" lived, because it seemed to him that "monsieur" did not belong to the *quartier* ; and then he wondered what could bring "monsieur" up such a steep hill merely to look at the country. Immediately I found myself surrounded by a posse of National Guards, one of whom unfortunately remembered that he had seen me pass *twice* in the same street in front of the "Mairie," and that was strange, very strange indeed. I was lost unless I made a speech ; so I plucked up courage and began. "Citizens, I shall only be too happy to answer all your questions ; but first let me tell you how much

I admire your watchfulness: our friends at the Federal Chamber will be proud to hear that Montmartre keeps such a vigilant eye on traitors. Our worst enemy is the Reaction." Before I could proceed any further with my harangue the "citizens" interrupted me with profuse apologies, which I had the generosity to accept, and hastened to remove myself to some less *national-guarded* spot. I never yet felt brave in presence of the "citizen soldier." His presence overpowers me, his boots appal me, his képi strikes terror into my soul. A musket is after all but a musket in the soldier's hands; but in a citizen's it looks so terrible!—and then its owner glares at me so fiercely whenever I venture beyond the ramparts. I sink within my inner self and probe my conscience with questions. Sometimes I fancy that I am a Prussian and that Bismarck pays me to go about and take note of what I see.

By this time the first intelligence began to ooze in from the provinces, and gave us some small comfort about the work that was being done at Tours for the relief of the capital. Whether two superannuated lawyers, MM. Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin, were the men to rouse effectually the spirit of resistance in the country and dispel the universal lethargy which threatened to let Paris die a slow, lingering death

amidst the silence of France,—this was another question. Still the prospect of relief, however small, broke cheerfully the oppressive stillness of the last fortnight.

One question now began to take precedence of all others, viz., the best plan for rationing the unknown stores of food at our disposal, which, as the Prussians persisted in their inactivity with the intention of reducing us by sheer blockade, became our strongest weapon of defence. With these difficulties looming in the future, and with the political leisure so liberally granted by the Prussians, the party of the Commune revived and gained strength. Great agitation prevailed in the ranks of the National Guards, who were secretly canvassed by their revolutionary officers, and prompted by them to demand the election of a Commune. Not a day passed without the Government's receiving some fresh deputation from the faubourgs, who presumed to force upon it "in the name of the people" the wildest and most contradictory schemes of action against the Prussians. All agreed in condemning its slackness, and demanding more vigorous measures. Flourens had established his head-quarters at Belleville, which he had made his own, and where he commanded five battalions devoted to his person. The Government, divided by internal dissensions, held parley with its rivals, promised at first municipal elections, then adjourned and finally refused them

altogether. The conduct of the Government was inexplicable unless viewed in the light of the history—not the official, but the secret history—of the Fourth of September.

*Ille dies primus lethi, atque ea prima malorum . . . .*

*Causa fuit . . . .*

A friend of mine, whose name has already appeared in these pages, M. Jules Andrieu, a man of powerful intellect, and a great authority on questions of revolutionary tactics, has kindly placed at my disposal a minute and elaborate account of the Republican party, and its efforts at self-organization during the period which elapsed between September 1870 and March 1871. His revelations illumine this less explored—because less obvious—portion of the history of the siege, and bring forward in their true light, and real proportions, a system of facts which the foolish bourgeoisie pooh-poohed and denied, until it was crushed by them, and which the historian might as pertinaciously have ignored, had not recent events compelled the world to acknowledge their existence.

My friend wrote on the 15th March, three days before the ignominious flight of M. Thiers' Government—

“The abortive insurrection at La Villette, on the 14th August, made two facts clear previous to the downfall of the Empire,—1st, that the Republican party was

not organized, since it could not, immediately after the first disasters of the campaign, prevent the further ones of Sedan, Metz, and Paris, by upsetting the dynasty. 2nd. That the deputies of Paris, who had conceived a plan of action, hesitated, when the time came, to act. Camille Pelletan (son of the deputy), informed me of a general insurrectionary movement, which was to have taken place two days sooner. The deputies of Paris issued a counter order, which Blanqui's party ignored, or chose to ignore. When Gambetta denied, in the Legislative Assembly, the legitimacy of this revolt, and took his cue from Palikao, he was simply denying the fact of his own complicity, and he lied—but a lie costs him so little.

"On the 4th September, besides the facts with which the public has become acquainted, there was a background of facts less known—so many engagements taken, so much calculated silence, so many compromises, moral treacheries, which afford a clearer insight into the history of that famous but inglorious day.

"A meeting of the deputies of Paris, at which M. Grévy was present, brought out in its true colours, the histrionic vanity and folly of those comedians. All were agreed that it was impossible to continue the war. Grévy said that it was not for Republicans



to endorse the responsibility of Imperial bankruptcy.

But those *gentlemen of Paris* had so much faith in their cleverness and dexterity, that they fancied they could, at one stroke, pass through the bankruptcy court, and obtain power, by a saving clause, for themselves.

“Grévy was sceptical of the whole business, and was honest enough to keep aloof. But what must be thought of our friends of the Left? These gentlemen were unwilling to proclaim the Republic with Vésinier, who was in possession of the rostrum in the Corps Legislatif. The Place de la Concorde is the real spot on which the Republic was proclaimed. Gambetta only proposed to go to the Hôtel de Ville, to gain elbow-room for deliberation. He alone, with his personal friends, closeted in a room by themselves, appointed Etienne Arago, Mayor of Paris, and Kératry, Prefect of Police.

“Rochefort, just released from Ste. Pélagie, and already surrounded by his ill-advised friends, receives from the Left the Kiss of Judas, and defers till the morrow the urgent business of the day—the organization of the Commune—that Commune *promised by all those gentlemen of the Left*, as the tacit stipulation, and reserved clause of the compact, in virtue of which the Republicans, whose work the 4th of September was, consented to leave in power the men

for whose benefit it was enacted. That 'morrow' never came, nor, indeed, could it come.

"On that evening, at the head-quarters of the International Association, in Place de la Corderie, Leve-days proposed that placards should be immediately posted, summoning the electors to nominate a Commune for Paris, but was not listened to, and when, next day, he returned to the charge, the International Association, by refusing to hear or to understand, lost us the Republic. Instead of action, a manifesto was proposed—again mere words! Matters had indeed come to such a pass, that Tolain, who presided on the 4th, at the Place de la Corderie, expressed himself to me in these words, 'My friend, we are either on the road to the Universal Republic, or to Cayenne!'"

"Trochu placed a guard of gendarmes at the Louvre and the Tuileries. This gave rise to the report that the Orleanist Princes were hidden in the palace. And quite recently, it was positively reported from England, that on the 4th, Trochu played the game of the Empire in the morning, and of the Republic in the afternoon, with the Orleanist Princes present and consenting."

A government of pettifoggers, which sustained itself by so much double-dealing, so much playing at cross-

purposes, and petty lawyer-like devices, could not fail, sooner or later, to be involved in difficulties, which have ultimately proved inextricable for the reputed wisdom of M. Thiers. No doubt M. Jules Favre felt embarrassed in October, when Belleville put in its claim, and haughtily demanded the price of its support on the 4th of September. Rochefort, when called upon by Flourens to declare his intentions, and choose between the Government of which he was a member, and his old associates, replied, "after descending into the store-room of his conscience," that, for the sake of union, it was better to adjourn such explanation to a more favourable opportunity : perhaps he was too busy with his barricades—a pastime invented by his soberer colleagues, to engross Rochefort's attention, and to keep him out of mischief. Gambetta was exhausting his better energies in finessing with the deputations of the Communalist party ; and he tyrannized over his colleagues, men of the mildest dispositions, new to the functions of government, and hopelessly unfitted for them by a long career of reckless, break-neck rhetoric on the benches of Imperial Assemblies.

Such a state of affairs enervated and distracted the powers of the military defenders of the capital. In vain did General Trochu attempt to introduce discipline in the ranks of the National Guards, whose well-paid idleness and the habits it engendered made them pecu-

liarily incapable of organization. All work or useful employment they had unlearned; their military duties were as yet purely nominal—two hours' drill every day and a night by turns at the ramparts: so they spent their time in drunkenness and gambling. Sometimes they would fix upon some harmless individual and arrest him as a Prussian, or break into private houses at night and gratify private enmities or indulge in petty larceny under the pretence of spy-hunting. The club was their usual place of resort in the evening; there they listened to orators whose favourite theme was the heroism of the population in contrast with the incapacity and faint-heartedness of the Government. And, finally, the business of the day would end, as it had begun,—at the tavern.

The popular journals were complacently counting up the days of the siege, as if each unit, added to the list, raised our consciousness of heroism to a still higher pitch. Every morning we were lulled into tranquillity by neatly-worded official reports, announcing that a fort had pitched a couple of shells into some Prussian guard-house, upon which, presently, "an ambulance had been seen on its way to pick up the killed and wounded;" or else Sergeant Hoff had added another Prussian to the list of his numerous captures, or brought back more curiosities, helmets, &c., from the enemy's outposts. Now and then, some "personage of mark" has been

slain, and there is great joy on the boulevards ; we put it down as certain that the personage in question is either Moltke, or Bismarck, or Frederic Charles—we are tired of killing “Fritz;” he enjoys such a good constitution. *Figaro* is our special providence, and has undertaken to keep us lively. The other day he treated us to a description of “William’s” life at Ferrières. “William” lies in bed till eight, then gets up, breakfasts heartily as befits such a slayer of mankind, fills a great meerschaum and puffs into vacancy for the space of an hour, dreaming the while of “Augusta.” This done, he puts down his pipe with befitting gravity, and Bismarck hands over to him his letters and explains their contents. The mental effort is too great, and—he lunches, hunts in the woods of Ferrières all the afternoon, and sits down to his royal board at seven, with all his feudatories ; the good king leaves table a little before midnight. Meanwhile the “soldiers of Bismarck” are sighing after their village Gretchens, and calculating how many of them will ever put eyes on Vaterland again.

‘ Bismark, si ça continue,  
De tes Prussiens il n’en restera guère,  
Bismark, si ça continue,  
De tes Prussiens il n’en restera plus.’

Ah ! they are dismayed to hear that we are half-a-million of us in arms, ready to shed the last drop of

our blood to prevent their entry into Paris ; they begin to look forward uneasily to the approach of winter. Has not our great poet and prophet, Victor Hugo, given them solemn warning that "Prussia will be hurled into the abyss," on the brink of which she already totters ; that "the old strife of the Archangel and the Dragon is beginning anew ;"—need I say that we are the Archangel ?—and that our enemies "will have no more woods and thickets to hide in : the strategy of cats is of no avail against the lion." All this must have produced a deep impression upon the foe : it is clear that he meditates retreat ; for with a view to securing it, ever since the fight at Chevilly, on the 30th September, he has massed his forces in the direction of Choisy-le-Roi, to guard the bridge which keeps his communications open with Germany. And what if Strasburg, our idol and our hope, is fallen ? Has not Hugo told us that "if Paris has crowned the statue of Strasburg with flowers, History will crown Paris with stars ?"

*Saturday, 8th October.*—The fine weather, which prevailed till yesterday, took us in great numbers towards the west of Paris, and chiefly to the bastions of the Point-du-Jour, which are supposed to be the most vulnerable point in our *enceinte*. We go there of an afternoon, stand on the railway-bridge, and

gaze at the opposite heights of Meudon, endeavouring to follow, with opera-glasses and telescopes, the progress of Prussian batteries—real or imaginary—in the vicinity of the Château. I walked out there to-day by the Versailles road, and amused myself on the way by watching the antics of some Parisian Mobiles who were marching out towards Sèvres. They waved their flag, sung and shouted, cut jokes at the expense of their “sargent” and passers-by, and behaved more like a pack of larking school-boys than a troop of armed men going to the front. I stopped at the corner of the road, near the railway viaduct, to watch how they would pass through the gap in the barricade. Next me, a young Adonis of the Law Schools, with a pair of carefully-trimmed whiskers, dressed in the tight-fitting tunic of the Paris-Mobile, was leaning against a *victoria*, which contained two young ladies from the “Latin Quarter,” and seemed absorbed in his attentions to the charmers. He paused suddenly and stood aside, telling them: “I must salute”—pointing to a group of horsemen who were coming up from the bridge. In front of this group I recognized the well-known features of the Governor of Paris. His complexion was pale, and his eyes told of many sleepless nights; the face is energetic, but slightly wizened,—the expression cold, as he raises his fore-finger to his

képi in acknowledgment of the military salutes of the Mobiles. The crowd was silent as he passed, his presence seems to inspire silence. He must be a man of great reserve and even shyness of manner and disposition. Poor Trochu! was the expression that rose to my lips as I marked his bent frame—a fine philosophical religious head, full of calm and resigned courage—but not the *physique* of a mob-coercer; no smiter, where a smiter is needed.

National Guardsmen, placed as sentries on the bridge, were doing their best to keep the crowd off from the wooden palisade and the gaps in the masonry under the arches. The sight-seers were obliged to be content with a view from the parapet. Gamins were offering lorgnettes for hire, and a National, perched on a high-stool, was describing the merits of a telescope—a work of art—which he had taken great pains in mounting. "Mesdames and Messieurs, it is only five sous to pay. I am very sorry I have no Prussians to show you just now, but you can see through my telescope the Prussian flag on a gable of the Château"—the Château of Meudon in front of us.

Every day that the Prussians persist in their systematic inaction, adds to our lassitude and to the internal difficulties of Government. Privations are already beginning to tell: charcoal, for instance, is



exceedingly scarce. The people are in a state of nervous impatience, and the Government is playing a dangerous "see-saw game" between the Conservative bourgeoisie and the revolutionary leaders, with whom it is deeply compromised. To-day, we are threatened with a great manifestation of the Belleville battalions, who demand the immediate election of a Commune. Yesterday, there was some small stir on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, where groups usually gather in the open air to discuss the general state of affairs and the measures adopted by the Government. Two battalions had just marched down from the faubourgs to insist on municipal elections. The majority of the people seemed to disapprove of all this agitation, but blamed the Government for its want of energy: "the last sortie at Villejuif had thrown discredit on the military commanders who imitated the blunders of the Empire in sending twelve thousand men against thirty thousand!" Of course all our defeats are explained by the numerical superiority of the foe. "And what was M. Jules Simon about with all his fussy reformation of Public Instruction, schools, colleges and that lot? Too much of a professor, M. Jules Simon, just as his colleagues, were too much of lawyers!" People listen in silence to all this criticism, which a middle-aged gentleman is deliver-

ing himself of for the benefit of one group; then pass to another one, asking, "What news of Belleville? or the army of the Loire?" Now and then, a National Guardsman develops to an admiring audience a plan of his own for raising the siege: it is very simple—take 300,000 men, range them in a certain way,—a wedge, a column, or some other formation,—and then push through the Prussian lines." An artilleryman, who was appealed to, did not seem very enthusiastic about the plan, or indeed about the defence of Paris. He told how a few weeks ago he was taken away from his wife and forge, and two little children, though he had already served his seven years in the regular army,\* and then was sent to the front with his comrades, exposed to all the brunt and hardship of the war. "Ah! 'tis a hard lot to be an old soldier: we are recalled for the very reason which should entitle us to exemption from further service—that we have already served." "But then it is a compliment to your experience and an honour," suggests a gushing National. "Thank you, sir, for the honour," replies the gunner, "and I make you welcome to your share of it." "Remember, you are fighting for the Re-

\* The law of the 10th of August called out all old soldiers between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, who had served their full time in the regular army.

public." "The Republic—that's all very fine; but it strikes me we soldiers are like the jackass who, when he was told to rejoice in a change of masters, said, 'What is that to me? I have the same load to carry,'—and that is exactly our case, and what with all your political discussions, it will all end in our having a master and being killed for somebody's pleasure." I could not help admiring the shrewd honest sense of this worthy gunner, in whom gun-practice seemed to have developed a quiet saturnine philosophy. I have generally observed that cynicism and discontent prevail in the Artillery corps. Perhaps, they grow too deaf in the exercise of their profession to be much impressible to oratory. Empire or Republic, victory or defeat, is much the same thing to them: they pass by, sitting on their gun-carriages, with their short clay-pipes in their mouths, serenely indifferent to all that is going on around them. Chatillon convinced them of the superiority of the Prussian artillery, and their convictions are not easily shaken. The army is sadly demoralized and takes no pains to conceal it. Listen to the conversations of soldiers in the streets; they say, "the Prussians will come in, *l'arme au bras*, without firing a shot, and we can't prevent them." The National Guard is very indignant to hear this, but I cannot see what they are doing to prevent it,

beyond arresting deserters and crying out against other people's cowardice. They demand a *levée en masse*,—a measure which approves itself to the mass as the one that requires least individual energy. At times, they pause from the "game of the cork," and put their heads together very wisely. Somebody suggests that we are no longer the men of 1793 ; we have degenerated from our ancestors in allowing ourselves to be shut up by half our number of Prussians. They all agree that we require a Danton and a Carnot, and then resume their play. The silver five-franc piece hits the cork—down fall the halfpence, and suddenly our hero forgets all about '93 and his "patriotic anguish"—he is so delighted. Next moment, he is ready to lend a willing ear to some middle-aged gentleman, evidently connected with the "Administration," who volunteers the news that the army of the Loire is at twelve leagues distance, that the Prussians are getting exhausted and are quarrelling amongst themselves, and what is still more important, that the price of bread has risen at Berlin to more than three and a half francs the loaf, and that, as no regular troops can be spared to keep order in Germany, the *Landsturm* will make a revolution. What a treat! The Republic proclaimed at Berlin, while "Guillaume" is fondly dreaming of "Augusta" at Ver-

sailles;—I am not quite sure that it has not been already proclaimed in Hyde Park : the papers speak so positively of republican meetings held at Westminster to propose the dethronement of the Queen for preventing Sir Gladstone from sending over to our help some fifty thousand men.

*Monday, 10th October.*—At last Gambetta has taken his flight through the clouds. His journey, which has been for some time decided upon, is said to have been delayed by a nervous reluctance to trust himself in a balloon. The parting-scene at the car was touching in the extreme. Louis Blanc and some other friends escorted to the Place St. Pierre the Minister, who appeared wrapped up in a great furred cloak, which some kind feminine hands had prepared for the traveller,

. . . quem dat Sidonia Dido.

His legs were cased in elegant furred-boots. He gave frequent and minute directions to the aëronaut, M. Nadar, I believe, who resented, it is said, this ministerial interference with the details of his own profession. "Leave that to me, Monsieur le Ministre, I don't meddle with your *métier* : pray don't with mine." Gambetta and Louis Blanc spent the last moments clasped in each other's arms. One more kiss, and still one more ; and the balloon bore Gam-

betta to the skies. Where will he alight, and will he fall into the hands of the Prussians? If there is one man in France in whom young ladies—and married too—are interested, that man is certainly M. Gambetta, the balloon-minister. I have heard to-day of no less than six young ladies of fortune who are preparing to lay their hearts and worldly treasures, when the siege is over, at the feet of His Majesty Gambetta. To us, ordinary mortals, who have neither tender hearts nor treasure to dispose of, he has left a duplicate of a proclamation by him addressed to the French nation, and written in a terser style than we are accustomed to from his colleagues. Still, fine style will not make one forget that, to-day, the meat is rationed at the rate of a pound a-head for every five days. But this is only a beginning; for the stock of meat has been much squandered by the delay in taking decisive measures at the outset. In our arrondissement, all the butchers are to close their shops, and the meat is to be distributed by means of eight or nine "municipal butcheries" for the whole district; a small number to supply the wants of some 20,000 families; but the authorities, having closed the old butcheries, were at great loss to find suitable accommodation for the new. A clerk of the Mairie explained to me with great gusto the stratagems to which he was

obliged to have recourse, in order to coax and bully owners of convenient premises into yielding them up for the requirements of the "administration." A coach-builder's shop, conveniently situated in the Rue de Grenelle, was much coveted by the meat-department of the Mairie; but the law does not permit the compulsory appropriation to public uses of any shop that remains open; so strategy must be employed. The coach-builder was a notorious Bonapartist, an *enragé réactionnaire*; how could he be persuaded to surrender his premises for the convenience of the Republic. The clerk went to him in secret, and said, "Monsieur, I am very sorry to tell you that your carriages have attracted the attention of our *adjoint*, and he thinks of requisitioning them for the conveyance of the wounded. Wounded men are not particular, and their blood will stain your fine cushions." The coach-builder looked uneasy in his mind. "Perhaps, though, I may add," resumed the clerk, "that our *adjoint* has not quite made up his mind whether he will take your carriages or your neighbour's over the way. Your shop would do very well for a butcher's stall, and the other not quite so well. Perhaps, your carriages might escape if you were to offer your shop of your own accord"—and the shop was "offered."

## CHAPTER III.

## A NIGHT AT THE OUTPOSTS.

*Wednesday, Oct. 12th.*—I slept last night on the floor of the deserted mairie of Gentilly, where I was kindly provided with a lodging as a Prussian spy. There had been great movements of troops in the afternoon; some ten thousand men of Ducrot's corps d'armée, well provided with artillery, had left Neuilly early that afternoon, and had marched up past our avenue in the direction of Montrouge. I strolled after them, and leaving the town by the Orléans Gate, went across the fields in search of the best points of view from which I could survey the surrounding country, and the ridge of Chatillon, the scene of many a fight. Fort Bicêtre was not far off, and I remembered that I had a friend there, an officer of Marines. Thus far my promenade had gone on smoothly; no questions were asked by sentries or patrols. But while passing through the upper end of the village of Gentilly, which lies in a hollow near the fort, I was suddenly surrounded by a pack of wolfish-looking



villagers, who raised the cry that I was a Prussian, and abused the Mobiles for allowing me to pass unchallenged. An old sergeant of the Guard Mobile, who wore the Crimean and Italian medals, stepped out of a guard-house and asked where I was going. I replied, "to the fort on a visit to an officer." He asked me to follow him into the court-yard of the guard-house away from the crowd; when I got there, he desired me to step into his room on the ground-floor. Two of the villagers, who had hounded on the mob against me, rushed after us with volumes of evidence in their looks. The sergeant quietly waved them to the door, and then turning to me, said, "Monsieur, I am an old soldier—I am used to this sort of thing, and we shall settle matters as quietly as we can, *sans bruit*. Will you give me your name?" He offered me pen and paper, and I satisfied his request. A glance at the Christian names drew from him the observation, "You are English?" "Yes." "But I suppose you know German; I know a little myself, and I can talk it with you. You have, no doubt, some papers about you to establish your identity." Papers, I had none, not even my card, and I stated the bare fact. The sergeant put both his elbows on the table, and looking me hard in the face, delivered himself slowly of the following speech:—"Do you know, sir, that

you have put yourself in a most awkward position?

Yes, F——, a very awkward one indeed ; I shouldn't like for all the world to be in your shoes. Why, you are a foreigner ; you have no papers, no passport, nothing to prove who or what you are—and you are found at the outposts on the eve of a battle. I don't mind it myself, for I am not afraid, but F—— it might cost the lives of some thousands of our men." I told him to be re-assured, I had no hostile intentions, and asked him to take his pen and "verbalize." He took the one I had just laid down, tried its point, and then changed it for another, with which he wrote out in his finest hand the usual formula employed in this kind of literature ;\* then asked me my address, whether I had any relations in Paris, how long I had been in France. "You were going?"—"To the fort of Bicêtre," I replied, and I gave the name of my friend. "I wonder," he interrupted, "how you got out at the gates without a pass." I told him that nobody had stopped me, whereat he expressed his surprise. "By which gate did you come?" "The Porte d'Orléans." "The Porte d'Italie is the one people generally come out by to go to the Fort of Bicêtre, and you would have gone that way, Monsieur, had you been anxious to take the direct route ; but, perhaps, Monsieur has

\* L'an mil huit cent soixante-dix, &c.

a preference for the longest road. So you came up by Montrouge? of course you did not know that two divisions had gone out that way. I suppose Monsieur has a taste for scenery." He then examined me minutely in the itinerary of my excursion, and filled two sides of foolscap with my answers, read out the *procès verbal* to me when he had finished, offering it at the same time for my inspection, then folded it in four, and asked me to accompany him to the Colonel's. "We will go together," he said; "I don't wish to make any fuss in the street, or cause you any annoyance; we shall manage it all very quietly—and why—Monsieur, if you are innocent, so much the better, I shall be delighted; and, if not, we shall be very civil to you, and give you ten minutes with a priest, that is, if Monsieur is religious and cares for a priest." We went on chatting in this way through a narrow lane. The sergeant was most communicative, told me, "he was very sorry—but appearances were very much against me: my speaking French without any foreign accent, which is so rare amongst Englishmen, and oftener found amongst Prussians, and then—what could be my object in coming out alone, and without any papers, on such an unsafe excursion? I might be murdered by the villagers, who had their heads full of stories about Prussian spies." All these remarks he invariably wound up

by assuring me that F—— my position was a most awkward one, staring hard in my face to give force to his words. The colonel was away in Paris, and was not expected back till late. The sergeant looked perplexed, and proposed to take me to the commandant. The commandant was a courteous Breton gentleman who had served in Italy. We found him *en déshabillé*, packing up his trunk and pulling on his top-boots. He apologised for receiving me with so little ceremony, asked me to be seated, and began conversation, appearing to avoid anything like a direct question, but finding out all he cared to know. He looked rather grave when he heard that I had no papers, and said that, in the absence of the colonel, he could not take the responsibility of deciding what was to be done with me. "I am afraid," he added, "you will have to pass the night here; but I shall give orders for you to be looked after in the way of food and accommodation," and he told the sergeant to see that I was supplied with the *vivres de campagne*. "It is poor fare, but the only fare we can offer." I suggested that a message might be sent to my friend at the fort, who would come forward and establish my identity. The commandant at once assented, and gave orders to despatch a messenger forthwith, adding that he hoped the answer would come back in time. I returned with the sergeant to

his room, where we found a lieutenant and some of the men warming themselves round a small stove, on which an earthen pot was simmering for their dinner. Mobiles were coming round the sergeant to beg little extras for their *popote*, and it seemed no easy task to satisfy the demands of so many hungry mouths. They offered me refreshment, a glass of what they called *vermout*, and a seat by the fire ; and the sergeant despatched his message to the fort ; then, leaving the room, begged me to remain where I was : "he had just placed a sentry at the door with a loaded musket, and vous comprenez, Monsieur, if you were to leave the room, ce serait tout simple." . . . The lieutenant laughed ; the men looked grave and began to talk in whispers, which I occasionally overheard,—with side-looks at me to judge of the effect they were producing. A poor thin grey cat, who seemed to have outlived all his brethren in the village, sidled up to me and jumped on my knee ; I stroked him, and the officer, remarking his fondness for me, said, "it was a consolation to the poor beast to see a civilian—he had enough of the military : perhaps the sight reminds him of his old haunts." It was beginning to get very dark, and no answer had yet come from the fort. The city-gates shut at seven, and I began to think I should have barely time to get back.

The lieutenant told me that he was afraid I would have a bad time of it, when I should be led back to town; but I should be provided with a strong escort to protect me from the people. An hour had nearly elapsed, and yet no answer. At last, the sergeant came in, wearing a very long face. "Bad answer," he said, and showed me on the other side of his own paper the reply of the officer in charge at the fort. "Send the man off at once to the Porte d'Italie, give him in charge of the National Guard, and have him taken to the Prefecture of Police." I expressed surprise that my friend should not have been found at the fort; the sergeant looked grave, answered not a word, ordered a corporal to have four men in readiness, left the room, then came back, went to and fro. At last I saw the bayonets glittering in the court-yard. "Now," said the sergeant, "Monsieur, we are ready for you." I got up and wished him good-bye. "No, sir, not good-bye, but *au revoir*: we shall meet at four to-morrow morning." I surrendered myself to my escort, whom he expressly recommended to treat me with all possible courtesy, "*avec tous les égards*," and we tramped back through the village streets. We stopped before a small one-storied building, which I was told was the Mairie of Gentilly. My escort exchanged the pass-word with the

sentry on guard at the door, and we entered a ground-floor room, the ceiling of which was supported by four pillars. Boxes of biscuit were piled up in corners, or used as seats by the Mobiles, most of whom were lying about on the floor. They all rose to their feet as we entered, and the sergeant in command came forward to receive me at the hands of my escort. I was led into a corner behind a sort of barricade of biscuit-boxes which cut off all hope of retreat, and my four sentries placed themselves with their loaded rifles in the gaps. Presently, I was supplied with the *vivres de campagne*—a slice of bacon and a pound of bread; a box was shoved into my corner to serve me as a seat, a tallow candle was stuck on the window-ledge by me; and I was asked “to make myself comfortable for the night.” Such an invitation was not to be declined; but I asked my jailers to send a note for me to my friends in town, and relieve their anxiety. “Impossible!” was the reply, “as impossible as to go to Berlin.” I expressed the hope that the one might prove not more impossible than the other, and explained to them that I had an anxious mother waiting for me at home, with many an appeal to their tenderer feelings, asking them if their greatest trial was not to think of their own mothers in the far-off village who, for aught they

knew, might be fancying their sons long since dead and buried; and I proposed that they should take a note from me to the commandant with one enclosed to my mother, which I should leave open. A young corporal, on whom my argument *ad hominem* had evidently told, offered me a scrap from his pocket-book and a pencil for the "confection" of my note, and consented to carry it to his commandant; which being dispatched, I sat down and dined off my piece of bread and bacon. By degrees my jailers relaxed from their stern vigilance, and became quite friendly, showed me their chassepots and explained the use of them, and spoke about their own part of the country near the Jura mountains, which they had left but some few weeks ago;—yet the time seemed to them so long, and they wondered how much longer it would still be, and whether the Prussians would take it into their heads to march down that way, and drink their good red Jura wine—"Such good wine, sir,—you have no idea in Paris what it's like, and how sadly we do miss it here at Gentilly!" One of them was at Marseilles, in a merchant's office, when the war broke out, and was all of a sudden called off to his department to join the regiment, then packed off to Paris, he could not tell why: "were there not enough Parisians to defend their own city?" Just



then came in a lieutenant followed by a priest: "Our chaplain," whispered confidentially one of my sentries. The officer walked straight up to my corner of the room, together with the priest. We exchanged formal salutes, and he began at once in English. "You are from England, sir?"—"Yes, lieutenant." "From what part?"—"From Oxford." The lieutenant knew all about Oxford, and we began talking about the colleges, the river and the boat-races, to the great amazement of the *Mobiles*, whose respect for their officer seemed visibly to increase at every fresh sentence of English that fell from his lips. *Monsieur l'Aumônier* looked on approvingly, and every now and then put in his word. The lieutenant at last retired with a most courteous bow, looking well satisfied with his prisoner, and with everybody else besides. "He is a wonderful man, our lieutenant," suggested the *Mobiles*, after he had left the room. "How he does talk English! and *Monsieur l'Aumônier* too—only he doesn't seem to be quite so good at it, You know he came in on purpose to hear you talk English." All restraint was now removed between my captors and myself; one by one, the boxes were pushed out of the way; I was asked to sit down at their table, pressed with offers of brandy and tobacco, and was invited to take a hand at a certain

game of cards of their own invention, with which Mobiles solace themselves at night, when officers are out of the way.

Our *tapis vert* was a number of the *Figaro*, from which scraps were occasionally torn to light pipes. Our candlestick, a bottle with its neck broken, out of which, as a Mobile told me, there could be no more drinking. Most thoroughly absorbed in the game was our sergeant. He had lost the other night a fortune—fifteen francs—and was getting still deeper in the mud. Halfpence, and even silver, were rapidly exchanging owners, when all of a sudden no less a person than the Commandant himself appeared in our midst. The apparition of a spiked helmet could hardly have produced greater confusion amongst the gamblers, who whipped off with great precipitation cards, *tapis vert*, and *gros sous*, and stood up to receive their officer. The Commandant came up to me, holding out his hand, and expressed great concern about my note, which had not reached him in time to be forwarded, told me that it was too late for me to get back that night; but hoped I would pass it as comfortably as a ground floor and coverlet would permit, and, by way of consolation, suggested that it would be my first night of campaigning with the regiment; then asking me if the men attended properly to my comforts, he wished

me good night, and left to continue his "rounds" at the outposts. Cards, *tapis vert*, &c., reappeared immediately on the table, and the game went on till an early hour in the morning. The candles flickered out, and were replaced by new ones, of which the Mobiles were very lavish, seeing that they were "the candles of the Government." A score of sleepers, whose powerful snoring chimed in with the conversation at the card-table, were huddled together under their coverlets in corners of the room. Now and then a man would start in his sleep, groaning heavily and sobbing. His comrades at the card-table pause from their game. "Poor Jacques," says the corporal, "he is always dreaming bad dreams; it is no use to let him sleep, we had better wake him."

The corporal "de poste" came in occasionally to relieve the guards. Four sleepers were dragged out from under the coverlets, put on their legs, equipped, and sent out with their rifles to some uncomfortable duty, looking very sleepy and melancholy all the time while they were buckling on their bayonets and cartridge-boxes. At last I felt myself overcome by fatigue, and with the help of two Mobiles, one of whom lent his knapsack for a pillow on which I spread my handkerchief to make it soft, while the other contributed a tent to serve for a mattress and

a coverlet to keep me warm, I made myself a couch, on which I managed to sleep till dawn, when the cannon of Villejuif awoke me from my slumbers. It was a cold, raw morning, and the Mobiles looked very blank at each other, and exchanged remarks about the battle that was to come off, endeavouring to comfort themselves as best they could with tins of warm coffee which were brought in and distributed amongst us. Said one: "There go the cannons again, le canon s'amuse," and "the chassepots are hard at work." "When shall we see home again?" his comrade would rejoin. Parties came in reporting that a skirmish was going on at Cachan, a hamlet close by. Their company had some men engaged in it, and the post was to get ready under arms. The kitchen fires were blazing in a garden close by; a captain came up to superintend the weighing of the meat, and the attention of my companions was divided between looking after their portions and inspecting the locks of their rifles. They asked me how I had passed the night. "You would like to be at home," they said, "and so would we." "Ah! when will it all be over? What has become of our vintage?" The captain gave me a message from the Colonel, who wished to see me, and I was marched under escort to his dwelling. The men remained in the court-yard below, and I was shown

upstairs to the Colonel's bedroom by the orderly. I found him in bed, dressed in a tight-fitting woollen jacket, and smoking a short clay-pipe. The Colonel was an old African campaigner, with a short-cut moustache, a few grizzly locks round his temples, and with one of those thin spare frames that seem to have been specially fashioned for war. He received me with the courteous simplicity of a soldier, and requesting me to take a seat by his bed, expressed his regret that I should have passed such an uncomfortable night. He had returned too late from town to release me, and he smiled at my adventures, and showed me with an air of great amazement the officer's answer from the fort: "Send the man off to the 'Prefecture of Police, &c.' . . . the *man*—you know, that's yourself." He offered me a cigarette, asked if I had heard the firing, and said he was afraid his Mobiles had fired on each other. "They do squander their ammunition, and chassepot-cartridges are expensive. You have seen, Monsieur," he continued, "what they are—young men who, two months ago, never dreamt they would be called out to this kind of work; half-clothed most of them, many still in their peasant's blouse." I observed that they did not seem to me wanting in pluck, and that they appeared to have more *sang froid* than most of the regiments of the line. The Colonel

then began to talk of the war, and blamed the tactics of his countrymen. "Our generals carry on war just like a hundred years ago, when we had flint-locks that could not fire more than one round every two minutes, and with which you could not aim at a man a hundred yards off. The other day we lost two thousand men at Chevilly, under Monsieur Vinoy's command. The Prussians were well entrenched behind barricades, and they shot us down like rabbits. Our soldiers are, as it is, only too impetuous, and we have the greatest difficulty to keep them well in hand. Yet, what do our generals do? Why, they hurl them on *à la baïonnette* in the most reckless style against barricades and entrenched positions. The consequence is, that at four hundred yards they receive a volley; naturally they hesitate and waver, then dash on again to receive a second and a third, followed up by a fourth. If our generals will persist in carrying on war on that system, we colonels will not; we are anxious to husband the lives of our men." "Ah! Monsieur," said he, interrupting the chain of his remarks, "if England had chosen to step in." I ventured some remark about the London meetings. "Tenez, Monsieur," replied the Colonel, "England was not sorry, I fancy, to let us, with our usual presumption, go and get a lesson, and the lesson has been a severe one. Because they had

taken shots at Arabs, Chinese and Mexicans, our court generals thought that they were going to make a military promenade à Berlin. If the Austrians had been armed with breech-loaders, they would have beaten us at Magenta and Solferino. C'est égal, after Sedan there was a time when peace was possible ; England could then have given us the support of her moral influence ; active intervention was not necessary—yet she might have remembered that, in the Crimea, the two nations fought side by side as loyal and trusty allies.” He expressed great admiration for the “tenacity” and “discipline” of the Anglo-Saxon race. I asked him what he thought of German tenacity, and whether, in his opinion, the hardships of a winter campaign, and exposure to cold, and rain, and frost, might not weaken the *moral* of the Prussian troops. He replied, with a shrug of his shoulders, “The King of Prussia has made up his mind, and his soldiers will follow him to the very end ; they are puffed up with their victories, they live on the land, levy fat contributions, and have plenty of women following in their wake. The married men amongst them forget by degrees their wives and families ; in fact, they have everything that keeps soldiers together, and makes them stick to their colours. As for cover, they are housed in the villages, just as you see our troops housed ;

their foreposts are, of course, exposed to rain and bad weather, but then they are relieved at regular intervals, and they come back to recruit their health and strength in the houses, and last of all, their generals don't commit a single blunder." He explained their artillery tactics, and the skill with which they dispose their batteries in three rows, each covering the retreat or advance of the one in front ; but still, after eulogising the superiority of their generalship, and the discipline of their troops, he none the less expressed great confidence in the final result of the siege. "The army which we now put in line," he said, "is a new army, animated with a new spirit, and morally superior to the old one. The hard lesson we have received will have done us good. We are badly off, it is true, for artillery ; but with rifles we can make our way. Once we shall have got hold of the rope, we shall pull ourselves through." I wanted to know what he thought of our prospect of relief from the provinces. "La province!" he said, "we must do without it ; we must force our way through ourselves, and the provinces will join in the pursuit." The conversation next fell upon the state of the public mind in Paris ; the Colonel spoke with great indignation of Flourens and Belleville. "If they budge, we shall march down on Paris, and put them to rights in twenty-four hours ; but all this



revolutionary agitation is doing great mischief. There has been a sad falling away of national spirit within the last thirty years, and it is a melancholy sign for the future." On taking leave, the Colonel expressed, with true French courtesy, the hope that I would not retain *un trop mauvais souvenir* of my night at Gentilly. I assured him that, on the contrary, his reception of me had made it one of the pleasantest recollections which the siege would probably afford; and we bid each other "*adieu*," or rather "*au revoir*," for *au revoir* sounds better in times of danger like these.

Poor Colonel D——! A man who has accepted the command of a Mobile regiment has virtually signed away his life to his country.

The Colonel's card enabled me to go to the fort, where I found on enquiry that my marine friend had changed his quarters; hence the mistake which led to my detention as a Prussian spy.

The musketry had died away on the line of outposts, and except an occasional gun from the redoubt of Hautes Bruyères, there was nothing to remind one of an impending battle. The troops, who had marched out the day before, were carefully stowed away in the villages, and one could hardly realize the fact that 30,000 men were hidden on a few miles of comparatively open ground, like a couple of police officers lying in ambush for the thief.

## CHAPTER IV.

## LOST TIME.

*Friday, October 14th.*—Next day came off the fight at Bagneux, on the slopes of the hill of Chatillon. It terminated as all these engagements invariably do, in the “retreat in good order,” which, to the disgust and discomfort of Parisians, is now understood to be the necessary *finale* of all siege operations. The first positions of the enemy had been won, and a certain number of Bavarian prisoners taken in the village of Bagneux. The troops of the Line showed a certain spirit, and the Mobiles were, for the first time, seriously engaged. They were all surprised by the signal of retreat, which was sounded along the lines shortly after General Trochu had made his appearance on the field, and they seemed utterly at a loss to give any account of the fight to the crowds who pressed eagerly round them; but what can a man be expected to know of a battle in which he has taken part? A vast number of sight-seers, among them several ladies, had come out beyond

the fortifications, to the Plain of Montrouge. Rochefort, with some of his colleagues in the Government, watched the progress of the fight from the Fort of Vanves, which received a few stray shells from the enemy's field-guns, a circumstance which to-day's papers represent as reflecting great credit on the "President of the Barricades," and the Government to which he belongs. The crowd grew very merry at the sight of the helmets brought in by *Francs-Tireurs* and *Mobiles* on the points of their bayonets, and ran, like children, with clapping of hands and waving of hats, to meet the Bavarian prisoners whom we persist in calling "Prussians." Some of the German wounded were carried off in cabs and private carriages, drawn up in long files behind the ramparts, like on some grand opera-night before the peristyle of the "*Italiens*." A friend of mine went up to a wounded Bavarian, who was lying behind a bush at a few yards from the Frenchman who had shot him; the Frenchman sat opposite, looking woefully at the *Prussien d'en face*, and at a gun-shot wound in his left arm. The Bavarian, on seeing my friend approach, raised his arms, as if in the act of levelling an imaginary musket, and shouted "Poum," to warn him off. My friend disarmed the wounded warrior by replying "Nicht Poum," had him picked up and removed into his carriage, together with the French-

man who had been the author of his wound ; and these two, after exchanging shots on the battle-field, exchanged cigars on the way home, with mutual assurances of everlasting friendship, in a language invented for the occasion. Such is war, from the soldier's point of view.

*Tuesday, October 18.*—Paris has been thrown, these last few days, into great uneasiness, by news from the provinces, which the Government is suspected of withholding. On Saturday, M. Portalis, editor of the *Vérité*, a new paper, which is, in fact, the old *Electeur Libre* minus, M. Arthur Picard, reproduced in the form of questions, a number of despatches communicated to him by an American friend, from a copy of the *Standard*, which had found its way to a certain embassy. M. Portalis, accordingly, “interpellates” the Government in the columns of his paper with great emphatic notes of interrogation, large print, and the usual devices of Parisian editorship. “Is it true,” he demands, “that the army of the Loire has been worsted in several engagements?—that a Red Republic has been proclaimed at Lyons?—that an armistice, proposed by Count Bismarck, has been refused by the Government of National Defence?” This parliamentary form of interpellation, applied to journalism, is a somewhat novel mode of circulating news, but it


shows what precautions are rendered necessary by the present nervous state of public feeling and the wavering policy of the Government. The number of the *Vérité*, which contained this information was immediately bought up on the Boulevards, and the Government found itself obliged to depart from its so-called diplomatic reserve. The *Official Journal* broke the ice on Sunday, by inserting a long prosy note—the composition of some third-rate scribe—which attempts to evade M. Portalis' questions, denounces the *Standard* as “a journal notoriously hostile to France,” and threatens the editor of the *Vérité* with a prosecution for disturbing the public peace. The effect of this note is, that the more intelligent classes have lost all confidence in the statements of the Government, and that the great majority, whom any official falsehood, however gross, will always lull to sleep, have felt even their confidence shaken by the severe measures taken against M. Portalis, who is confined in the Conciergerie prison. A symptom of this distrustful anxiety is the eagerness with which people question foreigners, assuming them to have access to mysterious sources of information. Colonel Lindsay's arrival here, which was only notified in the public papers a few hours after his departure, has caused a great deal of excitement. All Englishmen are supposed to have had

from him a long and detailed account of what is going on in the provinces. People insist on being "told the worst;" but it would argue great simplicity if one were to take them at their word. The Parisians have a peculiar gift for interpreting facts, and if your interpretation does not coincide with theirs, you are put down for a "child of Bismarck." It is as well to remember that M. Thiers was stigmatised as a Prussian, in July, for predicting the disasters which have since overtaken his country. The best thing for a foreigner is to hold his tongue; but that is no easy matter with a people so femininely ingenious in interpreting silence. M. de Flavigny's visit to Versailles is the theme of much and anxious speculation. On one side you hear, "on the best authority," that he has not only reached Versailles, but has actually dined there, with "Notre Fritz," who professes great admiration for the heroic resistance of Paris, and declares that we shall not be bombarded. Methinks they are getting rather partial to Fritz of late, since that council of war at Versailles, which *Figaro* has detailed minutely, and at which "Notre Fritz" declared himself so thoroughly impressed and demoralized by our valour that he advised immediate retreat;—only his stubborn father cut the matter short, by bringing down his fist on the council-table. But to return to M. de Flavigny—some papers assert,

and very positively, too,—that he was stopped on his way to Versailles, and sent back to Paris. I am puzzled to know what is really to become of M. de Flavigny's dinner, and the assurance of Notre Fritz, that we shall not be bombarded. Are these stories only the offspring of our desire that they should prove true? *Somnia ægrotantium*. I must confess that, in spite of our boasted valour, we have periodical fits of depression caused by the prospect of bombardment;—or is it merely that we pass through certain inexpressible shades of temper for which ladies have invented the name of “vapours.” Paris then “*a ses vapeurs* ;” that is, Paris feels uneasy from various inappreciable causes, at the bottom of which is a secret longing to return to her old ways, and impatience to hear of Gambetta's doings in the provinces, and whether he has bethought himself of some *coup de théâtre* to put an end to the siege. Besides, family-separations begin to tell, especially in this state of monotonous suspense which makes time drag so heavily.

The sound of cannon and the sensation of being besieged have lost the charm of novelty; the sorties are now considered as moves forward which inevitably result in moves backward, and the military operations have lost in consequence a great deal of their attraction. A question of vital interest had been how to provide

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a substitute for theatrical amusement, for Paris may perhaps resign itself to live without meat, but never, so long as the world lasts, will it forego "*spectacles*" of some sort; and if the theatres close, the comedy or drama will be enacted in the streets, —a play in which the audience can take part, and consequently fraught with more than ordinary excitement to Parisian nerves. The clubs of the Porte Saint Martin and the Folies Bergères, so appropriately founded in theatres, endeavour to supply the want of theatrical amusement. Lawyers, publicists, and Protestant pastors treat us to set speeches in which they prove that by passing an evening in listening to them in the absence of Mlle. Schneider or Dejazet, "we are fighting a moral battle against Prussia, and this battle, we have not the slightest doubt, will end in our triumph. If Bismarck could only be here and witness our proceedings, he would be convinced that conquest is powerless against a great nation defending its liberty." A Protestant minister rejoices in our "moral regeneration." "Paris is no longer the frivolous city of bygone days," &c., &c. This is no doubt very pleasant to hear; still I can hardly say that the interest rises above the level of a sermon. Of course we are fond of compliments; we like to be assured that all is right, we feel in those pretty contrasts between our former frivolity



and our present moral regeneration the secret pleasure of a reformed coquette going through a course of Lent sermons from a fashionable pulpit. Then we are so philosophical after the manner of coquettes :— “When you have not what you love, you must love what you have,” is an essentially feminine and Parisian motto : we can’t have Schneider, so we are content with Pastor Edmond de Pressensé. Still the interest of all this is apt to fade and wither. Just now it is the fashion to club into societies of mutual admiration ; but fancy a coquette being told from morning to night by gentlemen in surplices, that she is fit to become the spiritual directress of a nunnery ; it is possible that she would end at last in yawning under the infliction of such continual praise : so too Paris, and that is amongst other reasons why “*Madame à ses vapeurs.*”

There are signs of an intention on the part of the Government to turn to some practical account the soldiering which Parisians have been indulged in for the last month ; but how cautiously and delicately General Trochu treats this question ! It is officially announced that a list will be opened in each Mairie for the inscription of volunteers from the National Guard. The cry of the people is for a *levée en masse* of the whole population capable of bearing arms. Volunteer-schemes seem to share the fate

of voluntary subscriptions, which receive a great deal of platonic adhesion, but break down in the stage of practical application. Individual enterprise is essentially alien to the genius of the French people, they wait for orders and are very docile when taken vigorously in hand. General Trochu's tentative manner of dealing with them, though well calculated to keep things quiet and prepare the Parisians step by step for each new phase of their malady, seems hardly so successful in rousing them to active and desperate efforts. He is, perhaps, too cautious in feeling the pulse of the people. I am told, on what I consider reliable authority, that when asked the other day his reasons for not risking more decisive engagements, he replied, Paris would be in consternation at the sight of ten or twelve thousand wounded. Yet, judging from the appearance which the outskirts presented on the day of the last affair at Bagneux, the nervous susceptibility of Paris to sights of blood seemed to have been greatly modified since the first sorties at Chatillon and Chevilly. Consternation has gradually given way to curiosity. The mournful silence which at first prevailed as the ambulances passed by was broken by various episodes. Paris gets quickly frightened, but recovers as quickly from her fright: it is an article of her belief that Parisians can accustom them-

selves to anything—an article to which all those who have witnessed them in their various moods will readily subscribe. Officers talk of a sortie to be made in the direction of St. Cloud and Versailles, and which is to take place some day this week. The Prussian lines are supposed to be at present thinned on the western front of investment, either by concentrations of troops in the direction of Choisy-le-Roi, where they are said to be in great force, or by reinforcements dispatched against the Army of the Loire. All these details are divulged with astonishing facility; and if Count Moltke's spies really deserve their pay, the Prussians must be about as well informed of Governor Trochu's intentions as the Governor himself. The affair of Chevilly on the 30th was, I can speak from personal knowledge, no secret in Paris on the 25th. The spy mania, after having made numerous victims, has, by a natural reaction, passed into the opposite extreme of unsuspectingness. Yet, we are astonishingly minute in our precautions to conceal what all the world knows as well and better than we do. The Government despatches allude in stage-whispers to armies of eighty thousand men "that are being formed at . . . ." [blanks intended to conceal their movements from the enemy]; and the public papers drop mysterious hints of concentrations of troops which are

daily taking place "in a direction that patriotism forbids us to reveal." Our secrets are indeed women's secrets.

*Friday, 21st.*—Another battle in the direction of the steep hills that run between St. Cloud and Versailles. The Duke of Wellington, to satisfy a questioner's curiosity, is said to have given once and for all the following description of a battle:—"A line of men is marched up as upon parade against a line of men, they fire, there is a cloud of smoke, and as soon as it clears off one line looks to see if the other has run away; if not, *it* runs." With the exception, perhaps, of a few minor features introduced in modern tactics by the invention of breech-loaders and perceptible to a military eye, a battle is pretty much the same from a close view as in the Duke of Wellington's description—the most uninteresting sight next to a grand review. I feel more interest in watching its effects on this feverish crowd of spectators massed from the triumphal arch down to the fortifications on the Avenue de Neuilly, and on this other crowd of amateurs who have smuggled themselves outside the walls in ambulance-carriages and by all manners of devices, to enjoy the fluctuating emotions of the fight. How keen their sight is to detect the smoke of imaginary French cannon behind the crests in the rear of the Prussian front, pounding the unconscious

foe with shells that with a little observation and unprejudiced use of the glass you can see bursting in the ranks of the red trousers. "Surely," cries a gentle lady, flapping her parasol and clapping her delicately-gloved hands, "there is General Polhès, and now those hordes of savages are getting it in the rear, I know all about it; for a friend of mine who knows General Trochu, told me that M. Gambetta's despatch contained no end of good news, which General Trochu did not publish for fear of letting the Prussians in the secret; but the general has told all about it to my friend." We soon persuade ourselves that the Army of the Loire is advancing, and the success achieved by the first dash of the French troops at Montretout is certainly a satisfactory beginning. So we hasten home to spread the news. We are always satisfied with a play if the first acts are brilliant, and don't sit out the dénouement.

Great was the disappointment of Paris, in proportion to the hopes excited by the first achievements of that afternoon, as the truth gradually oozed out. A vague report had been published in the evening by the staff, which touched lightly on the results of the attack made by the right wing towards the heights of La Jonchère, ignored the operations on the left at Montretout, dwelt

on the considerable loss of the enemy, and promised more "details as yet unknown for another day." Then came the news that Montretout had been abandoned, that cannons had been lost, that the Mobiles of Ducrot's army had fled, with a whole chapter of accidents in the commissariat and ambulance arrangements, and the usual story of "treason" and "incapacity of our chiefs." Gauls have a wonderful gift for believing in them, till defeat, and picking them to pieces afterwards. Each sortie reminds one in this respect of a lovers' quarrel. No caresses are sufficient for our generals when they give us notice that they are going out. They are heroes. We adore them for the space of an afternoon. Next morning the honeymoon is over. We fret and stamp and tear their proclamations and billets-doux; we vow they are traitors, and think hanging much too good for them. They come with soothing words and compliment our heroism, and smile and say that all is right, thanks to our admirable way of taking things; and then we make it up, and adore them more than ever. "*Pour quelques jours de plus.*" Extreme in our love, extreme in our hatred, and passing from one to the other with the rapidity of a keenly sensitive people, which those "who don't understand us" call fickleness, and to which we apply the epithets of generous and chivalrous. But all this time a dangerous undercurrent of agitation was perceptible, which

the Government was vainly endeavouring to stem by various ineffectual measures. It prosecuted Sapia, a commander in the National Guard, who had incited his men to direct rebellion, and Sapia was acquitted by a court-martial. Mottu, the mayor of the eleventh arrondissement, was dismissed. He had given great offence to the clerical party by proscribing religious instruction and christening boulevards with unorthodox names. Thus Boulevard Prince Eugène became Boulevard Voltaire to the horror of respectable people. Flourens, threatened with a court-martial for usurping a command in the National Guard and conspiring to subvert the Government of the Republic, declared in the *Combat* that he had been so accustomed to being condemned to death under the Empire that he did not fear the court-martials of the Republic.

All the bolder offenders passed with perfect ease through the meshes of the butterfly net which the Government spread to catch them. The votes of pet battalions were taken by agitators in favour of the establishment of the Commune. In his number of the 21st of October, Felix Pyat, a prime mover in all this agitation, took as his text the last circular of Jules Favre's—one of those unguarded academical effusions in which our Cicero poured forth to Europe the sorrows of his heart, and distressingly revealed to the Parisians the weakness of our position. "Europe will repent too

late of not having come to our relief," were the last words of Jules Favre's peroration. "Too late," echoes Pyat. "That word is mortal . . . It is the cry of despair ; it is saying that France will fall or surrender ; it is the last sigh, the last word of the Trappist, ' Brother, we must die.' " . . . "Two courses of policy were open to us, the policy of intrigue or the policy of boldness, the policy of M. Thiers or that of Danton. Placed between the two, the Government, I mean the Counsel for Defence, adopted a third, the policy of tears, and pleaded for France like Maître Lachaud pleading for Madame Lafarge. The Government appealed to the cordiality of kings rather than to the energy of the Revolution, and prayed and besought them at first. Then, failing to touch their spring of tenderness, tried to play them off. M. Thiers was sent to play them off in England, Austria, and Russia, and was played out himself. Not one single Cossack has he brought back with him to the assistance of Republican France ; but a harvest of barren proofs of cordiality, to use the language of the circular. He can well afford to bring this back in a balloon ; it don't weigh heavy. . . . People of Paris ! you have wished for the Republic. Why ? because it is the opposite of the Empire ; because the Empire was ruin, and the Republic was salvation ; because the Republic, in appealing to all your interests, alone was strong enough to raise you



from the abyss in which the selfishness of one man and yours had plunged you. Be then consistent; for this mighty task you must have a Republic, not the Empire under the name of a Republic: a Republic of republicans, and not of imperialists." . . . And Pyat proposes the panacea of the Commune. "If no Commune, then let us break both sword and pen and resign ourselves. Trochu will follow suit to Uhrich; Blucher's nephew will, like his uncle, be governor of Paris; four hundred thousand Prussians will master forty millions of Frenchmen; the sham Republic will have the same end as the genuine Empire. On the 15th of November, when the siege batteries from Strasbourg will begin the siege of Paris, then if Paris will not already have endured Ugolino's fate, then we shall repeat, in the words of the circular, 'too late.' Then Prussia will have France dead or surrendered. Therefore, citizens, while it is yet time, the Commune or ignominy! the Commune or Death!" These impassioned appeals, re-echoed by the countless voices of clubs, derived their chief force from the indecision and weakness which paralyzed the political and military action of the Government. It was now becoming evident that the plan for mobilising some thirty or forty thousand men of the National Guards, by voluntary enlistment, would end in failure. Yet, to disguise the mortifying fact, the National Guard complained that

more was not asked of it instead of less ; and the citizen soldiers, whose exploits even such journals as the *Combat* found it hard to chronicle, were clamouring for greater energy on the part of the Government, and a "sortie en masse" of the whole male population. General Trochu poured forth, in answer, a long and heartfelt address, in which he deprecated the desperate measures that the impatience of the people wished to force upon him, and gently remonstrated against the proposal to lead out the Parisian population to wholesale massacre. He wound up in saying that "he had a plan : " an act of condescension which drew upon the unfortunate governor showers of finely-pointed epigrams. "Have you seen Trochu's plan ?" people would ask of each other. "Oh ! he has a plan." "Yes, but it is under lock and key at his solicitor's, Maître Ducloux." "Do you think Maître Ducloux would give one a peep at it for a consideration ?" Thenceforth Trochu was known as "the man with a plan." It is related of Suwarrow, the old Russian general, that pressed by his officers on the eve of a battle at a critical juncture and questioned about his plan, he at first demurred, and after many fruitless efforts to shake off his tormentors, "Gentlemen," he said at last, as if yielding to their importunity, "you shall have my plan to-night, each of you, in a sealed envelope, which I request you will not open till to-morrow afternoon.

Good night, and see that everything is ready by to-morrow morning." The battle was fought, and won at noon. The staff was loud in its congratulations to the general. "Now, gentlemen," he said, "you may open your envelopes." They obeyed, and found inside each of them a sheet of blank paper carefully folded in four. General Suwarrow was never asked again for his plans. But Suwarrow was a Muscovite, and his officers were not Parisians.

Flourens, of Cretan fame, demanded the reason why M. Trochu did not carry on war as Flourens carried it on in Crete; possibly, the results of Flourens' Cretan campaigning were not brilliant enough to tempt the Governor of Paris into imitating his tactics. Flourens "plan" is very simple, "Primo, decree victory; secundo, shoot defeated Generals." I am afraid my poor friend Gustave Flourens would not have had long to live, if his short and easy method for disposing of defeated Generals had been adopted, and he himself been put in command. Slow progress was made in the casting of field-artillery; there were difficulties with civil contractors, difficulties between contractors and their workmen, whom even the offer of high pay could not induce to give up their idle play at soldiering on the ramparts. General Trochu had declared that a new-modelled field-artillery was the *sine qua non* of active operations beyond the circle of the forts; and the Civil

Committee of Defence stated that M. Dorian, Minister of Public Works, had contracted with private manufacturers for the delivery of 300 field-guns by the 25th of November. Could Paris wait so long, and would our provisions last? The question was highly problematic, even for the omniscience of our rulers. A Government Council was held for the express purpose of ascertaining the exact condition of our alimentary stock; and several municipal officers appeared before it to give precise information. The report was spread that General Trochu asked for two months and-a-half to mature his plans. Accordingly, a more thorough system of rationing was adopted, and our commons were provisionally reduced from 100 to 75 grammes of meat a-day. We watched to see how the good people of Paris would submit—they submitted. Parisian nature is a strange compound of turbulence and docility—docility which almost amounts to sluggishness under the infliction of the common-place grievances of life, and which gives way to sudden bursts of wild rebellion under the smart of heroic wrongs which mortify their sense of personal importance. At break of day, in the cold November morning, I could watch from my window the long *queues* of women at the butcher's door, some hundred of them, standing for hours unsheltered and half-clad in the drizzling rain—all for a quarter of a pound of meat. Monsieur was,

meanwhile, at the ramparts, at least, he was supposed to be there; but take a peep round the corner, and the chances are you will find the lazy rogue hob-a-nobbing in some wineshop with a dozen heroes of his stamp "who mounted guard last night at the 70th Bastion," and have congregated at their favourite cabaret to celebrate their martial prowess at the expense of those peasant-mobiles and provincial linesmen who camp outside in the mud and are slaughtered by wholesale in the sorties. As for Monsieur, he is ready with the last drop of his blood—strange that one should always be so generously reckless with the last, so cautious with the first drop of that precious fluid!—ready, aye, to defend the Republic against "traitors at home," and "Trochu's Bretons," provided the latter do not lose their temper in true Breton style and blaze away with their chassepots. Did he not "manifest" on that 21st of September, when the "Reaction" was sighing for peace and the army was tamely acquiescing in defeat? Did he not deposit a crown of immortelles on the statue of Strasburg? Has not his voice been heard in clubs and on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, breathing the spirit of his civic energy into a faint-hearted Government and demoralized armies, over which he exercises a sort of paternal blustering police? I conceive Monsieur, by all this patriotic exertion, has conquered for himself the right to spend his thirty sous

a-day—the grudging gift of an ungrateful Administration—in dignified leisure with his friends, tipping rum and absinthe; and his wife has equally the right to catch her death of cold in the rain, in order to secure her two or three ounces of lean, scraggy meat, for the famishing brood at home. Of course, all this brag, without doing, is not productive of much kindly feeling between our civil and military defenders. A Mobile stood up the other night in a club, and hinted that the Nationals preferred the club-Montmartre to the ramparts. This was an unpalatable truth to the roomful of Nationals before him; but our citizens are so wonderfully inventive, and display such fertile ingenuity in smoothing down unpleasant realities, to their greater glory. An orator immediately rose to inform the assembly that the officers of the Mobile were attempting to sow seeds of dissension between their men and the civic force, with a view to undermine the Commonwealth and introduce a reactionary Government. The *Combat* felt itself compelled to invent a sortie in which a battalion of National Guardsmen had actually taken part, and chronicled as follows its imaginary achievement:—"The sortie of the Volunteers of the 116th battalion, which we gave notice of the other day, has taken place. Our men pushed up as far as the outskirts of the Forest of Bondy, and there remained *in observation*. The enemy did not

move : so Admiral Saisset recalled the skirmishers and sent them back to Paris." A real gem of naïveté !


*Thursday, October 27th.*—Departure, at seven o'clock this morning, of English and American residents, with Mr. Woodhouse, and rendezvous appointed at Creteil. The travellers will have a long journey on foot, all the way from Creteil to Versailles, behind the Bavarian and Prussian lines, on roads which, by this time, must have been rendered impassable by heavy artillery-trains. The International Society has placed carriages at their disposal, which will take them as far as the Prussian outposts. Letters and parcels are strictly forbidden, for Bismarck is obdurately determined in the maintenance of our psychological blockade, and Bismarck has a way of enforcing his commands. This exodus of strangers, if I am correctly informed, has been all this time delayed by the French military authorities, from an apprehension of the bad effects it might produce in alarming the people. "The English are leaving," is whispered on the Boulevards ; "there must be some reason for it ; we are surely going to be bombarded." To pacify our fears, a journalist suggests a more favourable expression ; it is the want of beefsteaks the English residents will endure no longer. "You know, messieurs les Anglais are in the habit of con-

suming a great quantity of beef, and if ever London were besieged, London would surrender the day it found itself without *biftecks*." Still besieged people are, like prisoners, painfully ingenious in self-torture, and there are not a few who expect to hear the enemy's shells crash into our houses as soon as the last Englishman will have put his foot across the Prussian lines. This morning's *Siècle* takes leave of the beefsteak-eaters in tones of triumph and exultation. "Go then, you who have lived with us since the commencement of the siege, go forth and tell Europe what you have seen here for these last forty days. We do not ask for your indulgence ; tell the plain unvarnished truth. Be our messengers to the nations ; repeat what you have seen simply as you have seen it ; this will be our best revenge for the calumnies and falsehoods of the Prussians." I am rather curious to know what tale the beefsteak-eaters will tell, and whether they will fulfil their duties towards us as "our messengers to the nations." Alas ! I am afraid they will be too much engrossed with their beefsteaks, to remember to do justice to our heroic virtues.

One feature, at least, of besieged life in Paris, has taken most Englishmen by surprise, and that is, the good order and relative absence of crime which have prevailed since the beginning of the siege, though



our streets are as dark at midnight as the poorest suburb in London. This appears to them all the more astonishing, after that prodigious sale of sword-sticks, revolvers, and other weapons of personal defence, which was either the cause or the outward result and expression of the intense social panic that prevailed during the last fortnight of September. But foreigners, as a rule, derive their opinion of the Parisian working-classes, from the wealthy bourgeoisie that inhabits the most Haussmanized hotels of Haussmanized Paris, a class corrupted to the core by selfishness and fear, whose each successive generation, since the days of 1793, has begun life under a Reign of Terror, to continue it under a reign of epicureanism, or *vice versa*, without ever realising the fact that Government and the State could mean anything deeper than safety for neck and purse and secure three per cent. enjoyment of existence. These are, perhaps, minor points ; but most people generally overlook the real facts of our position. Those who tell us that crime, lawlessness and anarchy have always flourished in besieged cities, forget that our lawlessness is organized, and that our anarchy is legal :—therefore less dangerous in their immediate effects, so far as individual comfort and property are concerned, than in their possible and remote consequences to the state and society at large. With



regard to crime, the usual incentive of misery is wanting: the "dangerous" classes, amongst whom the crises of labour determine crime, are at present cared for, clothed, fed, enrolled, and subsidized by the state. The siege, in fact, realises the working-man's Utopia of Pay and No Work, to the amount of thirty sous a-day. Vagabonds, professional thieves, &c., were expelled in great numbers before the investment; and the natural propensity for theft has found an outlet in marauding outside the city walls, so we purchase part of our safety at the expense of the furniture and valuables in our country homes. Never was Paris so free from crime as during the last six weeks, and that not in spite of, but by reason of the siege.


The event of the day is a paragraph which appears in Felix Pyat's paper, encircled in solemn black, denouncing "the felony of Marshal Bazaine, who has sent a colonel to parley with Prince Frederick Charles for the surrender of Metz, in the name and for the benefit of Napoleon III., and the treachery of the Government of National Defence in withholding the truth, as a state secret," from our knowledge. The news fell like a thunderbolt on the promenaders of the Boulevards. M. Felix Pyat's office was at once surrounded by an angry mob, clamouring for immediate explanations. Men stamped, and shrieked, and

howled, swearing that the whole story was a Prussian invention, whose propagator was in the pay of Bismarck. M. Pyat, like a prudent man, was "out," and the brunt of the people's wrath fell on his secretary, M. Odillon Delimal, who, upon giving positive assurance that the story rested on no less an authority than Rochefort, was dragged to the Hôtel de Ville, and confronted with the editor of *La Lanterne*. The interview was unpleasant in the extreme to both parties, more especially to the Man of the Lantern, who lost his temper as a means of getting out of the scrape, and vented his displeasure on the absent Pyat, describing him as a liar, coward, and impostor, with the usual amenities of Count Rochefort's political vocabulary.

*Saturday, October 29th.*—How many various and conflicting impressions divide Paris at this present moment! Rue de Rivoli, I meet Dr. X—, a venerable, rosy-faced optimist, looking rosier than ever. "Do you know the news?" he cries. "We have taken Bourget and Drancy, and soyez tranquille, my dear sir, they will sneak off. Our programme is no longer 'Not an inch or a stone,' but 'Not one brass farthing of our treasure': 'Pas un sou de notre trésor,' as I have told you all along;" and the worthy doctor goes on his way, chuckling with suppressed delight, muttering the well-known

litany of "the inch and the stone," &c., like a dévot mumbling over his beads. "Have you seen to-day's *Combat*?" growls a patriot of the fiercest type, who sips his demi-tasse between the hours of one and six at the Café de Madrid. "I tell you this J . . . F . . . of a Government is playing false ; something must be done ; until we march on the Hôtel de Ville, and pitch Trochu out of the window, we shall not know on what ground we stand" (My friend is a gentleman with a strong propensity for standing on his head). Still, it looks as if mischief were really meant this time. The *Combat* has turned the tables on the Government, by declaring in its number for to-day, that "it had the news of Metz from Flourens, who had it direct from Rochefort, member of the Government." This places both Government and Rochefort in a most awkward position towards each other, and the world at large. How bitterly MM. Jules Favre and Trochu must regret that they ever took such an *enfant terrible* into their councils ! Men say that Felix Pyat has seized this opportunity to pay off old scores with Rochefort, who is in bad odour with the patriots of Belleville, since he turned a deaf ear to their remonstrances of the 5th October. I do not envy the glass house in which our politicians live, but it must be confessed that they do their best to make it as brittle as it is transparent,

by their petty tricks to conceal the truth until concealment is no longer possible. I leave the Café de Madrid, impressed with the conviction that some terrible catastrophe is impending, and that Belleville will this time pour out all the vials of her wrath; yet I find the Boulevard des Italiens wearing the same thoughtless aspect as usual, and Joseph Prudhomme intensely satisfied with himself and all around him. "Que voulez-vous?" the Government has spoken, and when a Government can be got to speak, Prudhomme is satisfied. And then Bourget—what a capital diversion! This time our own Mobiles, the Mobiles of the Seine, have covered themselves with glory. The world is just beginning to take a rosier hue; but unfortunately I meet a pessimist philosopher who speaks like a book, or an article in the *Revue des deux Mondes*. My friend sighs after his bygone literary days, he gives vent to doleful complaints of intolerable *ennui*. As we take our "siege walk" on the quay by the garden of the Tuileries, our conversation is of the melancholy type, and the distant booming of the guns of the forts does not lend enchantment. I hate the distant sound of cannon,—not that I love it close—but distance gives a funereal muffled tone to its reports. I begin to think of Paris as my coffin, and fancy I am listening to my funeral salute. The Seine at my feet looks



melancholy, as it gurgles under the arches of the Pont Royal. Perhaps it is a poor compliment to the liveliness of my friend's conversation ; but I feel on leaving him in that frame of mind in which water looks suggestive. Monsieur Thiers is expected here to-morrow. What news will he bring ? And will he bring peace ? We flatter ourselves with a vague notion that he is going to perform a miracle ; but has not Citizen Pyat cautioned us against the "pedlar Thiers and his wares," and told us that the amount of sympathy he brings from Europe is not heavy, and "could be carried in by balloon." When people don't know what to do or think, they go and dine ; so we go home and attempt to dine on our sixty grammes of meat, which used to be seventy-five, and next week will be fifty.

On Sunday morning, 30th October, the village of Bourge was stormed with great loss by the Prussian Grenadier Guard, and whole battalions of Mobiles, surrounded and surprised behind their barricades, surrendered to the enemy.

The events of the morning were not generally known on the Boulevards till towards two in the afternoon, but the official despatches of the previous day were fraught with ominous presentiment. The *Combat* which appeared that morning, noticed a few current rumours about the fight :—"A strong body of Prus-

sians had been surrounded between Aubervilliers and Bourget" [that was the body which cut off the retreat of the French troops from the village last mentioned], but with true Parisian credulity the captors were put down as captured, and it was affirmed that this time the Prussians found escape impossible. Still, on the whole, the general impression was one of doubt and uneasiness; and an insidious article appeared in the columns of that morning's *Combat*, which was to all appearance intended to give the finishing blow to the men in power. When M. Pyat changes his wrathful tone for one of deliberate and courteous irony, he means most mischief; and anyone who read between the lines of his anonymous article of the 30th October was prepared for the events of the 31st. Both for this reason, and as a master-piece of French irony, M. Pyat's production deserves to be quoted at length:—

"This Government is full of good intentions; nay more—I can even vouch for the fact, that it struggles to prove its own existence. Those who have gone so far as to deny the reality of its being, are, evidently, unacquainted with the interior of the Hôtel de Ville, where they would not fail to perceive, from the number of troops stationed about the building, that something unusual is taking place there every day. At sight of all those armed Mobiles, a foreigner might imagine that the enemy

is close at hand,—perhaps on the Pont-Neuf. Most lamentable delusion ! Those Mobiles are the Guard of Honour of the Government of National Defence. In that building a certain number of people—it is a real fact—do meet every day and appear to be doing something. But what ? It is a profound secret. Nevertheless, it must be some very hard work ; for when you meet them in the gallery, they bend their heads with an expression of profound melancholy, and on leaving the building they stoop as giants carrying the universe in the lining of their over-coats. Their deliberations are screened with the greatest care from the eyes of the outer world : not a soul is present at their councils. Now and then, one of these worthies escapes for a minute into some corridor, receiving, as he passes, the salaam and obeisance of the same usher in waiting that salaamed to an Imperial Prefect—for there is nothing changed at the Hôtel de Ville ;—then suddenly he vanishes behind some wall. Are those men ghosts, endowed with a mere imaginary existence ? Do they belong to some terrible Council of Ten ? What is there behind that wall ? No sound issues, and nothing transpires from their secret cave. Look at those men ; you would take them for simple quiet folk—this one is pot-bellied, another is bald, a third has the rubicund tints of an augur, that lean one



wears chequered trousers—good honest people, not at all dangerous; you feel inclined—were it not irreverent—to wish them ‘good morning’ as they pass. Hush! those men are Romans; in them alone centre all the glories of the great Roman commonwealth: all the glories, and all the titles.\* They have not with them, it is true, Fabius or Brutus; but Fabius is at the Louvre, where more than ever he deserves his surname of Cunctator; and as for Brutus, Brutus is departed—let us hope not for the plains of Philippi. Brutus is magnificent: every now and then he sends despatches after this style: ‘All is well: we have been beaten at such a place; such and such a town has surrendered, such a general has capitulated; but all is going on well, remarkably well.’ Perhaps you might fancy that thirty-eight millions of men, if they chose, would not allow themselves to be stamped out in handfuls of two thousand without stirring from the spot; and possibly the thought might occur that if we had cannons, those cannons would shoot, and that if we were the strongest we would not always be the weakest; but Brutus affirms the contrary, and Brutus is, we know, an honourable man . . . . .

\* The reader will recognize General Trochu, Gambetta, Picard, Jules Favre, and Rochefort respectively, under the disguise of Fabius, Brutus, Lucullus, Cicero, and Cassius.

Some might add that up to the present the only thing which has not failed is the defence of Paris, and since nothing has succeeded of what has been attempted, it were perhaps time to try our hands at something new ; but Brutus affirms the contrary, and Brutus is, we know, an honourable man. To use a slightly un-Roman comparison, Brutus reminds one of those hotel waiters who tell you constantly that your mutton chop is 'doing quite well, sir,' and yet never bring the chop. Yet we must not make remarks ; Cato would reply that our suggestions are not constitutional. In vain you would observe that there is no longer any constitution ; Cato and his friends won't admit that ; their superstition is Formality . . . . . Under the Imperial Government President Schneider thought the Prussian invasion of France was not quite constitutional, and he was ready to call Monsieur Guillaume to order : so is Cato. The great anxiety of the present Government is to make as little change as possible in what preceded it. Our Government sighs each morning at the thought that it is itself illegal and unconstitutional ; we expect from one day to another to hear of its writing to the ex-Emperor for leave to govern France. Joseph Prudhomme, who for the nonce has become a Roman too, is in ecstasy. Under the Empire, Joseph used to say, 'The man at our head


is a villain and a wretch: we have all made up our minds on that point, but don't let us supersede him, for fear we may cause division.' Joseph says now, 'I agree that our Government is weak; we are all at one on that; but be careful how you touch it, for fear we may cause division.' And Joseph concludes with this dictum, 'When you have a Government, you are bound to support it.' Lucullus has remained behind in Paris, and Cicero, forsooth. Lucullus is fat; the nation gives him five thousand francs a month to be fat, and Lucullus obeys the nation. Cicero weeps, to-morrow he will alight from his litter and bare his neck to the sword: a great man is Cicero. So help me God, here is Cassius looking pale—Cassius who used to make Cæsar's flesh creep. What, so mighty against Cæsar! so feeble by the side of Antony! Pass on, 'tis but the ghost of Cassius. And here is Cato the elder, ex-humed; he wished to sit by his brother of Utica. His head shakes a little; he is not, as they say, *quite up to the mark*; he has forgotten his Delenda Carthago, and from time to time he goes up to a secretary and whispers in his ear: 'Now do pray find something against the Socialists.' Cato the elder makes a confusion of the Socialists with the Prussians, he has an idea that it is the Socialists that have burnt Orleans, and that Prussian sentries

mount guard at the door of Gustave Flourens. To sum up, these Romans do nothing, only they have a 'plan' which they listen to each day with renewed pleasure; after which some of them leave the building, looking thoughtful, a carriage is in attendance at the door and they get into it. Where are they going? Good heavens, why they are actually going beyond the fortifications. Sometimes they make the round of the ramparts. Sometimes they pay a visit to a fort or examine through a telescope the spots where the enemy might be. Finally, they come home to dinner, convinced that they have done their duty: Mobiles have touched their caps to them and they have given an airing to their plan. As I said at the outset, this Government shows evident signs of life and motion—so far as I am personally concerned I have no objection to them: I would not disoblige, and I am the first to advise patience. There are sometimes strange incidents which baffle all prevision; and after all, there is nothing to prove that this Government will not be the salvation of Paris. Does not History tell us that Rome was saved by the cackle of the geese in the Capitol?"

## CHAPTER V.

## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

*Monday Night, 31st October.*—On leaving home towards noon, the first thing that caught my eye was a proclamation of Jules Favre's, announcing the surrender of Metz, by "Monsieur le Maréchal Bazaine" (who was styled last week by the Government, "the glorious soldier of Metz"); and side by side, in ominous juxtaposition, was another placard, which informed us of M. Thiers' arrival with the proposal of an armistice. Can that mean peace? But that last unhappy clause of M. Jules Favre: "It is well understood that the vote of Alsace and Lorraine, and the re-victualling of Paris, are a *sine quâ non* of the armistice," sounds too much like an ultimatum. Peace? But it is M. Thiers who would be prime mover in the negotiations for peace: *ergo*, Jules Favre is not anxious for peace. His chief solicitude is for his *dear Republic* of lawyers. Perish France, but save the honour of the Republic which he has taken into his keeping! M. Jules Favre has



long ago made up his mind that the whole business shall wind up with one of his most high-flown periods, in the style of 1789 : no doubt he will find admirers in history. History is stupid enough to admire whatever is held up to her for admiration. She will admire us for having lived without butter and fresh eggs, and grumbled over our horse-steaks ; but she will refuse her admiration to my cat, who is a great deal more heroic than all of us put together, and who may some day be called upon to sacrifice himself in the frying-pan of his country, to prolong the lives of some of its defenders.

I strolled through Place Vendôme, on my way to Dr. A——, who lives near the Boulevards. A few sight-seers, prepared for a row, were already gathering on the pavement in Rue de la Paix. A man in a blouse was complaining in a husky voice, choking with suppressed rage, of the manner in which the young Parisian Mobiles had been abandoned under the murderous fire of the Prussian artillery. “ You are not told what you have lost,” he said to an inquisitive crowd. “ I was at St. Denis myself, and I know our losses. We shall never be told them. ‘ A few hundred men surprised in the north of the village ! ’ You’ll believe that ; but how is it, I should like to know, that we are always surprised, always surrounded ? ” A National Guardsman, who passed by

with a Snider rifle on his shoulder, looked hard in the speaker's face, and said, "There are a great many B—— who have not taken a gun, and do nothing but talk." I found the Doctor, who is a great politician, very irate with Trochu, and the members of the Government. "Trochu! don't mention his name to me: a good art-critic—knows how to criticise a picture; ask him to paint one and he cannot. . . . What are we coming to?" I suggested the possibility of a military dictatorship under General Trochu, with M. Thiers for the direction of foreign affairs. "Impossible; there is no creature alive more unpopular than M. Thiers; we would not have him for all the world." "Yet he is the only French statesman whom Europe, rightly or wrongly, respects." The Doctor shrugs his shoulders in reply, and groans over the disaster of Bourget. "What we want," he said, "is energy." Energy! that word is in every Frenchman's mouth: he seeks it in his rulers not finding it in himself. Hence the continual appeal to the legendary achievements of 1792. France, in our day, is a nation of Childe Harolds trying on the armour of their forefathers, without any faith in it. My friend became silent and sombre. "Well, there's Flourens!" he said at last, with the shrug of a doctor giving up a desperate case to the hands of a homœopath. If Paris finally succumbs,

write on her tomb: "Here lies one who died of too many doctors. *Periit turba medicorum.*"

I must add that Doctor A—— had just come back from the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, where he had seen the National Guard raise their muskets butt-end upwards, while the mob was shouting, "Vive la Commune! No armistice! War to the knife! à Versailles, à Versailles!" Returning by Rue de la Paix, I saw the crowd had greatly increased. A gentleman was explaining that a revolver had gone off "accidentally" (as revolvers always do), and that the revolutionists had taken advantage of that incident to spread the report that the Mobiles were firing on the people. I had great difficulty in making my way through the crush under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, where the sight reminded me of Paris as I saw her on the evening of the 7th of August, with this difference, that then she dared not budge for fear of the Sergens de Ville and their bludgeons. Battalions of the National Guard were pressing onwards—a moving forest of bayonets and banners, in the direction of the Hôtel de Ville. Passing by the Governor's door, I saw one of their companies march into the courtyard—with what intentions, friendly or hostile? it is difficult in such times to tell friend from foe. Further on I see Jules Favre's proclamations torn down, and daubed with



ink and mud. The crowd thickened at every step; fresh battalions were pouring down in one continuous stream from the Boulevard Sebastopol; these were the battalions of La Villette, La Chapelle, and Belleville—the scourge and terror of Paris. They bore their muskets butt-end upwards, and showed them proudly to the mob. Groups of anxious, inquiring, gossiping bourgeois thronged round the doors and corners, within easy distance of some place of refuge, wearing on their countenances a stupid look of terrified curiosity, and ever and anon made a rush behind into some bye street, or dived into a court-yard for security. The men of La Villette halted at every step, brandishing the butt-ends of their muskets, singing, laughing, and dancing; they were rioters of the “Guguste” and “Polyte” type, and hiccupped *Vive la Ré-publique, Vive la Commune*. A fine treat for “Guguste.” No end of shouting, and manifesting, and public exhibition of his *faubourien* graces. I remembered a scene at a school which shall be nameless, when we barricaded doors and windows, jumped up on tables, and danced like red Indians round our *maître d'études*? “Guguste” is dancing round the Government; that is all the difference. The battalion falls back in consternation,—I believe there was a cart-horse in the way; again they raise the butt-ends of their muskets

with cheers that rend the air ; their Commandant, on horseback, surrounded by the foremost men, shrieks, gesticulates, and flourishes his sword, his men jeer at him, and thrust their muskets in his face. At last appears, like a *tableau final* in some melodrama of the Porte St. Martin, the Renaissance façade of the Hôtel de Ville, its balconies and windows swarming with the popular throng, that hangs, as it were, in clusters at the window-niches. And what clusters too ! The people ! yes, His Majesty, the people. The small fry of the factory and workshop, grocers' boys, coiffeurs, and reporters of the Boulevard press, in coats, trousers, blouses of all colours, grouped operatically, like a chorus in a burlesque, looking down from their triumphant heights at the stargazers and babblers below them, and showering upon us scraps of paper, on which, either in pencil or in ink, appeared the names of a dozen governments proposed for the ratification of the mob. Fresh masses were pouring in from the left bank of the Seine, by the Ile de la Cité ; these were of a new colour and description, they were the swarms of blue blouses from the dens of Faubourg Saint Marceau, the poorest and filthiest district of Paris, — they marched in military order, though most of them were unarmed, and not even provided with the *képi*, which is an essential of the National Guardsman.

In their ranks I saw faces I had never seen before, except in pictures of the Reign of Terror.

M. de Bismarck was wrong in saying that Paris contained a "populace." "No, Monsieur le Comte," as Republican Jules Favre styles you, Paris is without a populace. Paris contains a devoted and intelligent population—so devoted, so intelligent, forsooth, that at this moment, I understand, General Trochu, and Jules Favre on his right hand, surrounded by their colleagues of the National Defence, are sitting behind a long table, barricaded on each side with chairs, and are howled at, spat upon, fired upon, by that portion of the intelligent population of Paris, which Opposition leaders have vainly attempted to treat with soft words and flattery, until the cure of fire and sword is rendered indispensable.

I had an appointment with my sister at a friend's house in the neighbourhood, and found the whole family in a great state of trepidation. There were officers swelling with rage; even D'Artagnan, our lively friend from the south, seemed greatly impressed: for though a son of Marseilles, and a Franc-tireur, he remained silent and kept counsel with himself. Old ladies were complaining of the journalists. "Always those journalists! Oh, why did the Government not bundle them out of Paris

before the siege, with other public nuisances ? That horrid Prefect of Police has betrayed us : he was told this morning to get the respectable National Guard in readiness. Here we have again the Revolution and the guillotine, and what not." "Grand-mamma, I am shocked to hear you say so !" cries from the other end of the room an enthusiastic young lady, who cherishes a romantic passion for Gambetta, and has become in consequence a strong sentimental Revolutionist. "Grand-mamma, I prefer ten thousand Revolutions, I do, to one single war. The Government has only got what it deserved for all its stupid blundering, and—and," she gasped, "I admire the People !" Mademoiselle had not seen the object of her admiration at play on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville ; and an officer began maliciously to relate a certain episode he had just come from witnessing : he had tried to listen to the mob orators, one of whom, a workman, had thus addressed his brethren of the blouse. "Brothers, we have sent the Government about its business, because the Government betrayed us. Now we have the Commune and Liberty : we are all brothers, and we are not going to stand any longer the tyranny of the rich : everybody must fork out and go shares with his money. I say, long live the Commune !" and the speaker reeled back into the arms of admiring

brothers. The general conclusion at which, after much discussion, we at length arrived, was, that nothing remained to be done except to wait and abide the pleasure of the Commune. *Que voulez-vous ?* It is an accomplished fact : the Government is under lock and key in its own Council-Chamber and so much the worse for it. *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère ?* Why did it get into the mess ?

I returned home with my sister by the left bank of the Seine, where the bands of Montrouge and Saint Marceau were concentrating to swell the number of their brethren on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. They advanced to the sound of drum and bugle, singing their ribald songs against "Badinguet and his clique," whom they suppose to be at the bottom of all this treachery, with a vague suspicion that he will some day jump up, like Jack-in-the-box, in the Council-Chamber of their Town-hall. Good Heavens ! when shall we hear the last of the cry of "Vive la Commune ?" Let them have it, if it were only to stop their mouths.

As I am writing, I hear in our avenue the long mournful blast of the *rappel*, calling the National Guard to arms. I am writing in bed, for I have no fireside to work by—fuel is so very scarce—and I confess that, if I were a National Guard, the trumpet

would have to blow at least thrice before I should turn out from under the warm coverlet, buckle on my military accoutrements, belt, cartridge-box, bayonet and tabatière-rifle. I wish the citizens a pleasant night of it on the gusty Place de l'Hôtel de Ville ; but I should very much like to know what we shall find on waking to-morrow : a Dictator or a Commune ? Will Trochu and his Bretons scatter the men of Belleville ? But Trochu is in the hands of the Revolutionists, and probably by this time at Mazas.

*Tuesday, 1st November, Six A.M.*—Commune, or Trochu ?

As yet, I cannot tell. We heard all night the bugle summoning to arms the battalions of our quarter. Ours is a quarter ready to support any Government, for no other reason than that it is a Government, good, bad, or indifferent, but still a Government. It voted "yes" for the Plebiscite of May : that brands us, in the eyes of Paris, as the extreme opposite of Belleville. What if Trochu has really made his escape from the Hôtel de Ville, and turned the tables on his captors with the battalions of our Faubourg and the Bretons of Ducrot's army ? . . . . But what a *queue* at that butcher's door ! Here is, at least, an institution which no change of Government can affect. Oh, France, amidst the wreck of Governments, one thing at least shall endure, and that is *queue*, in all

its forms; *queue* at the theatre, where we stand shivering for admittance to the pit, *queue* in public offices, where we are penned like sheep, and huddle close together at the nod of an official with a cocked-hat on his head; all which has trained us into admirable subordination for standing in *queues* at the butcher's stall. I have just returned from fetching a green ticket, with a number on it, which gives me the privilege of taking, either in person, or by proxy, the hundred and thirty-first place in that *queue* yonder. As it does not rain, and the weather is warm, I think I shall go in person to fetch our daily pittance. I found "all the world" in that *queue* very busy with Trochu and the Commune. "Trochu has resigned," says an old dame—"ah! *c'est la Commune*," says her companion—"what is that Commune going to do for us?" asks a little hawk-nosed man, "will it make the *queues* a little shorter, and the rations a little longer." "Monsieur, I don't meddle with politics," rejoins the old woman, with a philosophical shrug of her shoulders, "but I suppose they are going to do *something*."

*Tuesday, Eleven, A.M.*—I strolled out after breakfast, having given up the *queue*, and went to see what Government we were under. It's provoking to live in a town, especially in a besieged one, without knowing under whose rule you enjoy the privilege of

existence; somewhat like being at a party without having been introduced to your host. At a few steps from my door, I met my vivacious southern friend of yesterday evening. "Eh bien," cries D'Artagnan, "do you know the great success of the night?"—"How many Prussians gobbled up, or taken?" I began to ask,—“Non, non, vous n'y êtes pas, you are off the track—I mean our success at the Hôtel de Ville. Hein! we made sharp work of it. First of all, I left the people we were with, and I say, 'Bertrand,'—that's my chassepot from Reichshoffen, you know, I call him Bertrand——” “But pray tell me about Trochu,” I ventured to interpose. “Wait a bit, you shall hear that in good time. Well I say to Bertrand, 'Now, Bertrand, you are going to do your duty——What are you waiting for? ah! he wants cartridges, ce cher ami—j'oubliais'—so mon cher, I take Bertrand, with plenty of cartridges—you know we couldn't, I couldn't at least, consent to be the laughing-stock of Europe”—— “But pray tell me about Trochu”——“Patience, you'll see presently; I walk straight into the Hôtel de Ville, and I hear the canaille saying, 'Ah! we've got him,—le Trochu!' Says I, 'Where is it you've got him?'—'Why, upstairs, to be sure, upstairs—le Trochu, safe under lock and key in a garret——'” “Oh! he was in a garret, was he?” I interrupted. D'Artagnan gives



me a nod, twirls his moustache, and continues: "Off I go to the Louvre with Bertrand, and, pardieu, it would not have done for Fleurens to have been in the way. 'Ha! ha! Bertrand, the rascal knew that thou wert with me, and he took good care not to come near thee.' I go up Trochu's staircase *quatre-à-quatre* as fast as my legs can take me; and, mind well, that none of them knew at the Louvre where Trochu was. General Schmitz was the first man I met. 'Mon Général, the Governor, is at the Hôtel de Ville in a garret?' 'Ah!' says he, 'in a garret? is that possible?'—Well, to cut a long story short, Jules Ferry came too, and I took him with a battalion of National Guards to the Hôtel de Ville—et en avant, mes enfans—I deliver Trochu, and we see him off in a cab to the Louvre. Trochu puts me to mount guard at his private door, me and Bertrand—with orders to let in no one without announcing him. General Vinoy comes up, and then General de Beaufort, and General This, and General That. 'Pardon, mon Général, one does not pass.' 'But I am General Vinoy!—Mon Général, one does not enter.' Only fancy what an honour to speak so to all those Generals. At last Ducrot arrived from Neuilly. He is an intimate friend of Trochu's, they are like brothers together. Says Ducrot to Trochu, 'I have 30,000 Mobiles ready, and

cannon on Place du Trocadero.' 'Let us review the troops,' says Trochu to Ducrot. The *Rappel* and *Générale* are beaten; the National Guard comes up shoulder to shoulder with the Mobiles and the Bretons, who cry, 'Vive Trochu! he is a father to us; we will die for Trochu.' We march on the Hôtel de Ville, surround the building with the National Guard, and *we* enter, I mean my men and the Mobiles; we kick the Commune down-stairs. Pyat, Blanqui, (counting on his fingers) Mottu, Bonvallet and Tibaldi are taken, and shut up at the Fort of Bicêtre by this time; to-morrow, court-martial, ten minutes grace, and r-r-r-an."

So Trochu was delivered by D'Artagnan and Bertrand, with the help of thirty thousand Mobiles and the National Guard. Further particulars we shall find out later on — for I fear my friend's account requires at least completion, if not correction.

The Mairie of the Rue de Grenelle St. Germain, "our Mairie," had not yet, to all appearance, cast off its temporary allegiance to the "Party of Disorder;" which pained me greatly on behalf of our quiet and thoroughly respectable Faubourg. But, in mitigation of the scandal, I will plead the fact that we, benighted denizens of the "Quartiers de la rive

gauche," enjoy the paternal rule of an enlightened mayor, one Dr. Ribeaucourt—a physician by profession and a zealous disciple of the School of Progress. The doctor is one of those well-meaning philosophers whose ambition in life is to hold the candle of Science to Revolution: when troublous times arise, our savant trims his lantern neatly and ventures forth into the darkness to shed his light upon the movement, but finds himself and his light extinguished in the doorway by the first rude breath of the mob. Our doctor's politics prevailed for some few hours at least at his mayoralty, which was still adorned with Dorian's placard, counter-signed by Schoelcher and Etienne Arago, "*Mayor of Paris, ex-vaudevillist*," and summoning the electors at noon to appoint a Commune by ballot. D'Artagnan stopped short before this paper, thrust both hands in his breeches' pockets, and perused Dorian's production with infinite gusto, interrupting himself every now and then with ejaculations such as these—"Ha! ha! the Commune! Cette bonne farce! and Etienne Arago's signature! Excellent! The poor man was in such a fix last night, placed between two fires, and he sneaked and trimmed to keep his place and save his skin." Then, after delivering himself of such reactionary sentiments, he turned round to exchange a few remarks with some National Guards-

men, who belonged, he told me, to one of the "good battalions," the 106th, which marched down last night on the Hôtel de Ville to bring Flourens and his friends to their senses. These worthy citizens had, all and each of them, achieved some feat of martial prowess, which they were not unnaturally anxious to relate to their friends for their mutual edification. Some of them had stopped an omnibus from the top of which a pair of *gavroches* were vociferating "Vive la Commune!" and had taught the miscreant urchins not to trifle with the dignity of the National Guard.

The morning sun shone brightly on the white quays and palaces of Western Paris, as if to cleanse her from the orgies of the night. We passed under the beautiful façade of the Tuileries—a mournful relic of departed glories. My companion was irrepressibly talkative. The sight of the palace put him in a philosophical mood, almost worse to endure than his fighting mood had been. "See what people those Bonapartes were!" he observed, pulling me by the sleeve and pointing to the marble staircase which led up to the private apartments of the Imperial Prince. "Nothing but marble was good enough for them to tread upon." Alas for the Imperial Prince whose august velocipede rolled, but four months ago, on this same asphalt pavement which we were now treading. The words

"National Property" and "Vive la République" were chalked up in large letters on the palace walls. "All our own property!" cries D'Artagnan in a feigned ecstasy of delight; "we have actually the right to pluck a rose in the flower-beds." He left me at the gate after many threats to leave, which, unfortunately, he never meant to keep; and I went on my way towards the Rue de la Paix, which I found literally choked up with battalions of the National Guard, enlisted in the defence of "Order." Order is a truly wonderful thing, only less wonderful than Success. Now, every man's tongue wagged fiercely in execration of Flourens, Blanqui, "and their clique." When, overnight, some powerfully wielded broom has swept the streets clear of insurrection, "society" discovers in the morning that it always was "on the side of the broom," as did the far-seeing Morny\* on the eve of the 2nd December. Yesterday, the Government was locked-up in the Council-chamber of the Hôtel de Ville, and it was then clear to all reasonable men, that though Belleville had been somewhat rough, and, perhaps, a trifle revolutionary, yet the Government must on the whole, and "taking a dispassionate view of the

\* Morny, when asked on the evening of the 1st Dec. 1851, what side he intended to take in the impending conflict, replied, "*qu'il avait toujours pour principe de se mettre du côté du balai.*"

case," have deserved its fate for past transgressions: else, how could it have allowed itself to be locked up? To-day, the Government has ejected the men of Belleville, and lo, by some miracle, we find ourselves "united, as we have always been, in its defence, and ready aye! to shed our blood to protect it from the nefarious enterprises of a contemptible minority." If I were in the place of a Parisian Government, "Si j'étais le gouvernement," as the phrase goes here, as soon as I felt the zeal of my respectable supporters growing cold, I should contrive to be upset and reseated in twenty-four hours: my triumph would restore me in the affection of my people and fix their waning admiration.

The obnoxious *affiche* of last night's Provisional Government has just been removed from the door of "Our Mairie," and "the municipal elections are adjourned" by order of His Excellency, Jules Favre, Minister of the Interior: so no Commune—at least, for the present.

Such was the state of things in Paris between the hours of eleven and twelve on Tuesday morning the 1st of November. The Government had been upset in the afternoon of the previous day and restored overnight. The question was now how it would use its victory,—and its choice lay between two courses of

action. Either it might cut the Gordian knot by proclaiming martial law—but Monsieur Jules Favre and his colleagues were hampered by political formalism as well as by mutual compromises and understandings, or rather misunderstandings, with the men of the advanced Republican party who had assisted them to overthrow the Empire—or else, taking advantage of the revulsion of popular feeling operated in their favour by the events of the 31st, they might retort against their adversaries the weapon of universal suffrage, and consecrate their power by a *plébiscite*. As it was, authority derived from an *émeute*, could not legally defend itself against insurrection. A military dictatorship is the normal condition of government in a besieged city, especially in such a turbulent one as Paris; but General Trochu was a believer in “moral force,” and shrank from treading in the footsteps of a Cromwell or a Bonaparte, convinced, as he expressed himself on several occasions, that “militarism had been the cankerworm of France.” A Frenchman of the type of De Tocqueville, a military liberal, who had spent his maturer years in a school of semi-Republican and slightly Americanized Orleanism,—intensely respectable in its choice of heroes, and acknowledging none but Washingtons and Lincolns for its models, M. Trochu was tempted by the ambition of employing none but gentle and liberal means to guide through

the trials of an unparalleled siege a capital which, from its natural turbulence and incapability of discipline, was of all other expected to succumb under the moral pressure of blockade :—a truly noble ambition, in the fulfilment of which he may possibly have sacrificed some of the military chances of the problem, and forfeited the common-place praise of history. At any rate, if General Trochu failed to deliver Paris from the Prussians, he succeeded in delivering it from the Parisians. The tentative and conciliatory character of his policy, not untempered with a soldier's firmness, the indecision, weakness, and moral obliquity of his colleagues were faithfully reflected in the incidents of the 1st and 2nd of November. Never had Parisians witnessed such a truly kaleidoscopic display of Governmental proclamations, which appeared from hour to hour, drawn up in M. Jules Favre's correctest Ferrières-style, improving, amending, contradicting each other, like some unskilful commentator's annotations, or a printer's list of errata. Thus at noon the municipal elections were adjourned : at one, a proclamation of Jules Favre's re-opened the whole question and placed the electors between the alternative of a Commune and the Government of National Defence.

*Tuesday night, 1st November.*—What a comfort that the Bois de Boulogne still remains open, and that



one can escape there from this pent-up, stifling Bedlam which the world calls Paris—this Roman Parricide's sack with monkey, cock, and serpent squeezed against each other—raving all day long of Communes, Republics, Armistice or No Armistice, and War *à l'outrance*. War, real war, is a relief from the antics of the orang-outangs that perform on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. Too much of Paris is irritating to the nerves: so I bade adieu to Paris for a while and made for *la province*, i.e. the Bois de Boulogne. The last thing I had seen of M. Jules Favre and his works, was a proclamation in which the Government was spoken of as having been "guarded at sight" by the men of Belleville. "Guarded at sight!" Is that M. Jules Favre's French for being shot at and spat upon? M. Jules Favre is a pious Catholic, and it is possible he may enjoy government as a means of self-mortification. *Chacun à son goût*. Forgiveness is a great virtue, but severity is a greater for a man in authority.

At the door of the Mairie, where I saw this turn-the-other-cheek-to-the-smiter proclamation, a little dwarfed and stunted creature with a cap slouched on its head and a blouse on its back, and which, on second sight, turned out to be a man, gibbered and squeaked to the full extent of its powers, that we "were sold and betrayed;" but the people were

hardly in the humour to heed him. How glad I am that I am not a Government, and consequently "not guarded at sight," like Monsieur Jules Favre, but free to go where I like and ramble in this pleasant sunny wood, which, excepting in the outskirts that face the ramparts, has hardly suffered to the extent we had at first imagined. War changes, after all, but very little in the external aspect of nature: when once it has settled down and made itself at home in the land; like a journey, war is saddest in the preparation for it. True, I see no fashionable equipages on the drive round the lakes, no *pur-sangs* of Albion, no powder, no paint, no golden chignons that changed in hue with the dye of Cora's hair; they are gone, they are vanished, and gone with them the glory of Imperial days. This time next year the golden chignons may revive, and under the auspicious reign of His Majesty Louis Philippe the Second, I may live to witness the chignoned pride and pomp of my *portière's* niece or daughter lolling on the cushions of a luxurious *huit-ressorts*, and smiling to her patron—some court-minion at present to be found in "Régent Strit," where he dreams of restoring happiness to France, *i. e.* some comfortable monarchy with a diplomatic sinecure for himself at the court of some Grand-Duchess of Gerolstein, or in some other grand-ducal Eldorado

In that era of felicity which some Pecksniff of the House of Orleans is destined to restore, the Bois de Boulogne, this cynical old jade of a bois, will revive in all its cynical voluptuousness; the grass will be green on the bastions, the embrasures will be filled up, the cannons will be stored away in the Musée d'Artillerie, as Schneider (Mademoiselle Schneider) used to say in the play, "Mettez-moi ce sabre dans mon musée d'artillerie;"—the siege itself will have become a dim shadow of the past,—gone out of fashion, obsolete, grotesque, and we its witnesses will 'be voted bores for remembering the time when the Avenue de l'Impératrice offered nothing to the eye but barricades and ditches, when a draw-bridge gave admittance to the bois, when cattle grazed in the race-course of Longchamps, and the hoofs of the oxen trampled out the turf, the delicate exotics of the flower-beds on the slopes, as they drank at the lakes. Now there is nothing to disturb the quiet of this elegant wilderness—nothing, not even the lowing of the herds that gave such a dreary look to the place during those sad September weeks of preparation; and if I regret their presence, it is certainly not from the æsthetic point of view. Just now I heard a sound of wheels, and I saw a dog-cart with an intrepid *élégante* sitting on the box: about her person and her toilette lingered some faint

subdued reminiscence of the days of chignon and powder; she was "in mourning for her country"—mourning befitted the delicate Parisian pallor of her complexion, and instead of a lap-dog she carried an opera-glass, armed with which she had come out, like the members of the Government in M. Felix Pyat's description, to satisfy her curiosity by a peep from the Mortemart battery or the cascade near Long-champs, at the spots "where the enemy might be." On the opposite heights of Meudon, Sèvres, and St. Cloud, which come out in perfect clearness of outline, we look and look in vain to catch a gleam of spiked helmets; but true to his character, the foe remains invisible, playing at "hide-and-seek," as Hugo has it—"la guerre de cache-cache"—a mode of warfare thoroughly unworthy of civilized soldiers who were not made to shoot without being shot. Not a gun is heard along the whole western line or from Mont Valérien, whose artillery thundered so fiercely at St. Cloud, as if anxious to court the favour of Parisians, and atone for its silence during the first fortnight of the siege. The grim black giant lay sulkily huddled up in his corner, in disgrace for having so narrowly missed pulverizing little Monsieur Thiers\* the day before. Was all this silence significant of negotia-

\* M. Thiers was nearly killed by a shell from the fort of Mont Valérien, near Sèvres, on his way to Paris.

tion, or was it that the foe kept well out of reach that day in his anxiety to lend no distraction to our civic feuds. Meanwhile, in Paris the National Guard was being reviewed on all the public squares, in front of the Hôtel de Ville, on Place Vendome, and Place de la Concorde; and regiments of Breton Mobiles were brought in from the outposts. One of these I saw marching down the Rue de Rivoli, and—was it that Ducrot had really trained these peasants into soldiers, or had the military *capote* made all the difference? I was greatly impressed by their martial bearing. So were the Parisians, too, no doubt, for they made way with an air of sheepish civility, as the Bretons passed looking very surly, and I heard whispers in the crowd: “Here come the Bretons, ils n’ont pas l’air content.” Bretons are proverbially hot-headed and obstinate. They have not the least respect for *Liberté, Egalité, &c.* *Fraternité* they know nothing of; their curés have poisoned their minds with reactionary ideas of discipline and of obedience to their officers, who belong to the class of country-gentlemen, a class which has not yet lost its hold on the peasantry in Brittany and in the western parts of France.

M. Thiers left at four yesterday afternoon. The journals entertain us with a number of anecdotes, more or less facetious, about his peregrinations in Europe and in

the streets of Versailles. In this *pro tem.* Prussian capital he met Count Bismarck, if we are to believe the *Liberté*, in Rue de Valois, and addressed him thus: "Monsieur le Comte, I can only speak to you to tell you that I cannot speak to you." It is asserted, on the other hand, and with more veracity, that he paid the Count a visit; but then, I suppose, in this era of street-government, visits are paid in the streets. Parisian *amour-propre* is sadly in want of a sedative at such a critical moment, and friendly editors do their best to coax it with brave talk about the illustrious little man and his Talleyrandesque *réparties*.

*Wednesday, 2nd November.*—Night brings counsel, especially to this Government, which seems to change its mind as regularly as do the morning papers. Yesterday the question put to the Parisian electors by Jules Favre, was a question between the Government of National Defence and the Commune, and the desired answer was NO, *i.e.*, No Commune. To-day the question has taken the form of a simple vote of confidence in the existing Government, and we pass from No to Yes. I wonder whether my friend Prudhomme will not have his memory muddled with all the self-destroying negatives and affirmatives. Poor Prudhomme, there is yet more to perplex you. To-morrow's Plébiscite is what we call a *boite à sur-*

*prises*, a cunningly contrived box with secret compartments, one of which is labelled Municipal Elections. "Ah! so we are to have municipal elections; it is the Commune granted by the Government, and Messieurs de Belleville have lost their grievance: it was only a *malentendu* that was at the bottom of all this row; in reality we are all of one mind, except the *canaille*." This is the *couleur-de-rose* view of the plebiscitum, and it helps respectable folk to sip their *demi-tasse* in comfort. "Halte là!" cries an Irreconcilable; "the first republic was lost by a compromise. I tell you, these J—— F—— of the Hôtel de Ville are simply playing on the word Municipal, which meant yesterday Commune, and means to-day quite the contrary, at least so says Jules Favre, and I believe a lawyer when he tells the truth against himself." For my own part, I am inclined to adopt the peasant's definition of plebiscite, "a Latin word, which, according to Monsieur le Curé, means oui." Say but "oui," and afterwards you will find out what you meant. M. Jules Favre has a double object in view; he wants to get rid of the mayors in office, and at the same time to keep, or appear to keep, his promise of municipal elections. The triumphant majority, which he evidently expects on the vote of confidence, will, in all probability, secure for him on Saturday the return of reactionary mayors, and these,

instead of forming a united deliberative body, in fact a Commune—which the term municipal is understood to imply, will be isolated and confined to their respective mayoralties, where they will become mere clerks of the Central Government at the Hôtel de Ville. I fear that visit of M. Jules Favre to Ferrières did him no good ; he must have taken a lesson in diplomacy from the Mephistophelic Count, and “Monsieur le Comte” taught him how to *Bismarck* us. But perhaps what appears in him diplomacy, is after all, a series of successful blunders. M. Jules Favre thinks himself bound to communicate to the world every fresh view that he grows into from breakfast till lunch, and from lunch till dinner ; do we not live under a régime of publicity. Our Government is crab-like in its motions, its course a perpetual zig-zag ; one move forward, two moves backwards, then a pause to change its direction ; finally it manages, in spite of friends and foes, to jog along after a fashion of its own.

There was a rumour this afternoon of disturbances at Belleville. I did not go to Belleville ; it is too far off, and the road is so steep. Besides, what if the Bellevillites should debouch in my rear, while I was trying to find them at home ? I should have the mortification of wandering through empty streets, and, all the time, the very people whom I had come



out to see, would be busy 'upsetting the Government in the heart of Paris, at the Hôtel de Ville ; so to the Hôtel de Ville I went, and put myself in the "centre of the situation." I found the square occupied by about two thousand National Guards, who belonged to the respectable contingent of the Faubourg St. Honoré. The first person I met—a man of some literary merit, and of strong Republican opinions, occupying a distinguished position in the "Administration," informs me for my comfort, that the ground we are standing on "is a volcano." He went about from group to group, shaking his head moodily, and muttering bitter imprecations against the Government and Trochu, for not having had the sense to foresee the events of Monday afternoon. "Look at them, there they are again, quite unprepared. Trochu leaves the Hôtel de Ville to take care of itself. What can you think of yesterday's proclamation, and to-day's again? Weakness upon weakness, imbecility upon imbecility! The Government puts its own existence in question, and really tempts one to upset it. I should not be at all surprised if an attempt were 'made to-day,' and so saying he looked nervously all around him. I directed his attention to a group of suspicious-looking patriots. "Let us listen to what they are saying," he rejoined, and naïvely confessed that, "in the worst group, I

could not hear the Government more abused than by himself." Presently, he chimed in with the most revolutionary amongst them. He offered me to see the whole sight from the windows of his office, which command a full view of the square; we had made up our minds that the Government was to be upset that afternoon, and we went upstairs to witness the ceremony of its upsetting. I remained full two hours by the great clock of the Hôtel de Ville, patiently watching the turn things were going to take, but my impression is that the Government was not upset. From our balcony on the fourth story, we saw the Nationals dotting the square in three parallel rows, closed in at either end by two perpendicular lines, that completed the investment of the place. Now and then, a flourish of trumpets was heard at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli, and a black group would move up to the lines, hold parley for a moment, and despatch a few of its number to the building. This is called sending and receiving delegations. Presently the delegates return to their friends, and they all go back the way they came, but without any flourish of trumpets. After this probably hostile demonstration, the Hôtel de Ville seems to think the time is come to make some counter demonstration, or to give some sign of life, for the great central door under Henri Quatre's equestrian

statue yawns wide open to give passage to half-a-dozen personages dressed in black—*de noir tout habillés*, as in the song about Malbrouck—black with a tricolour scarf. My friend was greatly surprised on recognising Etienne Arago at the head of this procession. “What! Arago still there? Why I know for certain that yesterday at two o’clock he had given in his resignation.” M. R—— forgets that it is as hard to kill certain republicans out of office, as to kill a cat out of its nine lives, and that nothing but dismissal, pure and simple, can rid their country of such devoted patriots: Mayor Arago had resuscitated over night, after a purely formal resignation, and he strutted, with his tricoloured gentlemen, round each company of the National Guardsmen, hat in hand, halting every now and then to deliver himself of what may have been a speech, with great gesticulation and flourishing of hats. As they went round, I perceived M. Eugene Pelletan, one of the Great Eleven, walking side by side with Arago. Arago carried his head very high, strutted and gesticulated: Pelletan carried his very low, kept his eyes bent on the ground, and said nothing. I observed to my friend that M. Pelletan did not appear to be altogether at his ease. “Good reason why—he tailed off on Monday, when the mob rushed in,” was the cynical rejoinder. The drums beat, and the group

vanished behind the portal, but Arago lingered on the threshold to catch the scant applause of the National Guards, a little formal cheering, just enough to give the stage-managers a decent pretext for dropping the curtain on this final tableau of their performance—and then *exit* Arago and all his suite. Madame A——, a courageous old lady, whose salon still continues in spite of the siege to attract a select circle of octogenarians from the Academy, remembers Arago in his early days; he was always fond of show, and used to boast of his real or supposed conquests amongst the fairer sex.

*Thursday, 3rd November.*—Paris seems to-day in a delightful humour with itself, the Government, Monsieur Thiers, the siege, and all the world besides, except Belleville. The voters flock like sheep to the poll, and not the slightest doubt is entertained of the Government's triumph. The Noes are roughly calculated at from fifteen to at most twenty thousand: we are so sanguine, and the sunshine inspires cheerfulness. I never realized till this war what an imaginary world we Parisians live in—a perfect boudoir carefully walled in from facts, with echoes cheerfully responsive to half-uttered thoughts, and mirrors that reflect in clear and perfect outline the half-sketched shadows of our fancies. Not a soul you meet questions the conclusion of the armistice,

which is "as good as signed: Bismarck will of course make objections *pour la forme*, but they won't hold in the presence of the moral support of Europe." All is going on well, "remarkably well," as the *Combat* said the other day. There seems to be an implicit understanding between the conservative voters and the Government that the latter will, in acknowledgment of their support, make things easy and smooth all further difficulties which may lie in the way of peace: M. Jules Favre will forget his inch and his stone—that was a mere *façon de parler*, and besides Alsace and Lorraine are not to be annexed to Germany, but "mediatized." Few people know what is meant by "mediatizing" a province, but that is just the point of the expression. What would be the use of diplomacy if it called things by their names? The shop windows begin to fill with unknown plenty; articles which had reached fabulous prices, such as butter, eggs, &c., are offered, in consequence of the armistice, at what we have learnt to consider "a very reasonable rate." A friend has just purchased an entire ham, a real jambon d'York, of a grocer who discovered it this morning by the merest chance in his back-shop upon reading his *Petit Journal*. I went into the same shop with the most couleur-de-rose print I could lay hold of, and the obliging *épicier* was

tempted by a paragraph in the *Electeur Libre* to discover a second edition of the armistice-jambon. I wish there could be an armistice every day: we might make up for all the time lost before and since the beginning of the siege, when we neglected to lay in a store of provisions. People are spelling hard the word armistice, which they will persist in pronouncing *amnistie*; and when the difference is explained, they begin to understand that the offer of an "*ar-mnistie*" was not intended as an insult: "it was all a *malentendu* the other day, the matter is explained." Had it not been for this popular confusion of terms, I hardly think the cry of "*Pas d'armistice*" would have been raised so fiercely on Monday; for the mass, so opposed to it then, is becoming quite reconciled to it now.

The week which opened with the revolution of Monday, the 31st of October, and ended on Sunday, the 6th of November, with the official declaration of the rejection of the armistice, may be justly regarded as the turning point of the moral history of the siege: it shaped the whole course which internal events took thenceforward in the beleaguered city. By the vote of the 3rd of November the Government had acquired the semblance of a legal title, and was emboldened to assert its authority against its former associates. M.

Jules Favre and his colleagues could kick from under their feet the ladder of faction on which they had scrambled to power. The extreme republican party was disarmed by the hypocritical adoption of the very measures which they had most persistently clamoured for, to wit, municipal elections. The wave of success which carried the Government through the plébiscite of the 3rd was to bear them triumphantly through the elections of the 5th. Failure in the negotiations for the armistice had committed the Government to a more decided military policy, which conciliated in a great measure the war *à outrance* party—though it gave rise to much dissatisfaction in the ranks of the regular army which felt itself sacrificed to the amateur soldiering vanity of the National Guard. Great was the indignation of the Provincial Mobiles, and especially of the Bretons. There had been some idea or vague suspicion that they would be excluded from the vote of the 3rd of November. Immediately several protests were drawn up “in the name of the Garde Mobile,” and a defiant manifesto was issued by two Breton commandants, one of whom, M. de la Roche Thulon, has since played a conspicuous part in the Assembly at Versailles, declaring that, summoned from their province to the defence of the capital, the Mobiles had a right to be looked upon as something more than mere food for powder (*chair à canon*), and that their

claims were at least equal to those of the mob which they had driven out from the Hotel de Ville. They ended with the threat that in case of exclusion—which would be to them a proof that Paris meant, as usual, to force her will upon France—the Mobiles would “*stand aloof and let events take their own course*: the battalions of Brittany would remember the traditions of their ancient Breton independence.” If the rejection of the armistice disappointed the army the disappointment was sorely felt by the Parisian bourgeoisie, that vacillates between extreme parties, lending its ear with the same favour or indifference to each new flatterer of its weaknesses and its vanity. It was clear that a few days’ indulgence in the delusion of an armistice and the lull of political troubles had relaxed the moral fibre and dissolved the warlike spirit of the people. Throughout the siege, Paris—the Paris which was brought to the surface by the Exhibition of 1867—played her everlasting comedy in corners, and, with the prospect of an armistice, the old irrepressible frivolity burst forth in its true light. Fine toilets flaunted in the Champs Elysées and drew forth swarms of *petits crevés* from their hiding-places in ambulances and other haunts of refuge, adopted by them to escape the obligation of service in the Mobile. The boulevards began to prattle cynically about the last disasters of the war: *Figaro* has preserved a



specimen of this levity, which it describes as shocking and heartrending, but nevertheless retails, with a number of shocking things, for the special delectation of its readers. "At last," said a *boulevardier*, "Bazaine has effected a junction with MacMahon." The infection spread even in the patriotic ranks of the National Guards, who were already forgetting to appear in uniform. One Guardsman meets another dressed as a civilian and calls out: "Tiens, te voilà déjà vêtu en armistice!"—Sign of the times that *Figaro* should chronicle such gossip. *Figaro*, who trades in cynicism, gravely asks what we are to think of public opinion which has passed from black to white in the space of one short week. "Monday—No Armistice, No Peace, War to the Knife: Public Opinion demands a *sortie en masse* on Versailles. Friday—When will the armistice be concluded? Public Opinion is impatient: Trochu and Jules Favre will remember the duty imposed on the Government by the generous support of the Parisians, who have been good enough to plump for them in the Plébiscite. Monday, 7th November.—The Government is in dire disgrace for having broken off the negotiations at Versailles."

General Trochu, whose acts always took Parisians by surprise, never surprised them more than by his abruptness in breaking off negotiations which he had

all along betrayed so much anxiety to commence, and by which he had jeopardized his popularity. His conduct was certainly very unaccountable in presence of the discouraging news from the provincial armies. A clear and detailed report of the real state of affairs in the country was expected from a man of M. Thiers' acknowledged competence in military matters. The silence preserved by the Government on this point could only admit of one explanation, viz., that M. Thiers had not held out the slightest hope of success. For many long days already we had been without any direct intelligence of Gambetta, and that during what we felt to be a most critical period in the general history of the war,—the period that followed the surrender of Metz and the ruin of the last hope of France in Bazaine's army. The suddenness of General Trochu's determination to reject all further overtures for an armistice may, perhaps, be explained by a coincidence of dates. The day on which the Governor of Paris cut negotiation short, was the day on which the long disbelieved-in Army of the Loire under D'Aurelles de Paladine began its onward movement against the Bavarian General, Von Der Thann, whose position at once became a position of great peril. It is obvious to any one in the least acquainted with military matters, that General Trochu had secret means of information at his command, besides the

private despatches entrusted by the Government at Tours to pigeon-carriers. Paris, however, remained in total ignorance of the turn things were beginning to take in the provinces, and supposing the truth even more dismal than it was, we fell from the height of our previous confidence into the depths of despondency. Writers of M. Edmond About's stamp began, in more or less covert phraseology and with much nicety of insinuation, to advocate peace, by which they meant capitulation. Rumours of an armistice would obstinately persist, and even gain ground in spite of the artillery of the forts which displayed unwonted activity at this period of the siege. The *Electeur Libre*, ever on the alert for an opportunity to bring the peaceful tendencies of the people to a climax, spoke of imaginary flags of truce planted along the western line of defence, and closed its ears to the thunder of Mont Valérien. This tone was caught up by the evening press; M. About's capitulation article was copied in almost all the papers, and had an immense sale in the army; so great was the reaction of the civil on the military element that the *moral* and discipline of the troops was thoroughly relaxed and battalions of Mobs did not hesitate publicly to raise the cry of "Vive la Paix," with protestations that they would not take part in another *sortie*. While the moral defence of Paris was undergoing this collapse, on the morning

of the 14th November, General Trochu put forward one of his most dismal proclamations, in which he expressed his regret that the armistice had been prevented by the popular outbreak of the 31st October, and recapitulating what had been done for the defence of the capital, and the resources available for resistance, he endeavoured to wind up for a last desperate effort the sinking courage of the people. The probable effect of this proclamation would have been to extinguish the last spark of hope and courage in the Parisian breast, which the language of despair could never stir to desperate endeavour. Fortunately, that very afternoon of the 14th, when General Trochu had seemed to sound the death-knell of our last and most cherished illusions, came the news of Coulmiers, the first omen of victory which broke the spell of disaster and defeat.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## ORLEANS.

THERE was a magic in the legendary name of Orleans that revived in these days of common-place Voltairianism, the memory of an heroic past amidst the agonies of an expiring nation. Wonderful was the effect, and for the first time the flame of patriotism burnt bright and fierce in the beleaguered city. Our heated imaginations took fire ; we saw Kératry marching with his Bretons from the West, D'Aurelles de Paladine pressing onwards with his Algerian warriors from the south, and as several days had elapsed since the fight of Coulmiers, we were already straining our ears to catch the first sound of their cannon. Great movements of troops were perceptible outside the ramparts, chiefly on the western front ; but the regular army, especially the Garde Mobile, was slow to recover from the effects of its previous despondency, and its efforts were confined to mere demonstrations, from a want of *elan* on the part of the troops demoralized by the political anarchy of the capital and convinced that

they were hopelessly and unjustly sacrificed to the passions of the Parisian mob. Nevertheless, a great and undeniable change had been wrought, a new start and impetus had been given, and the long-dreaded moment in which famine had at last to be faced as a fact, passed quite smoothly and almost unperceived. The Parisians learnt with much composure that the supply of beef and mutton was exhausted and that in future an ounce and a half of horseflesh would be their daily portion.

It was at this time that dogs, cats, and rats became the popular dish; the craving for fresh meat after some four or five weeks' comparative abstinence had removed all prejudice, more especially amongst the upper classes which enjoyed the advantages of Parisian cookery. Numerous *menus* of these siege-dinners have been preserved by "diners-out" of the period,—for not everybody could afford, at home, the luxury of a *salmi* of rats,—and these bear witness to the fertility of invention which distinguished our *cordons-bleus*. Cat and dog, which does not require such elaborate preparation, was largely consumed by the lower classes; ten and even twenty francs were offered for a well-conditioned angora, but these animals were generally stolen by the *gamins*. In the Quartier Montmartre a "Feline and Canine Butchery," with "Guerre à Outrance" for its sign, was publicly established and recognised by law.

I may here add that dog is not a bad substitute for mutton, and that cat, as all the world knows, is often eaten for rabbit. Mule is a delicacy which I prefer to beef, but our horseflesh was certainly poor. The rich made very merry over the *pâtés de rat*, and those who partook of this kind of food did so quite gratuitously in order to be *à la mode*—rat-dinners being generally held in derision of Bismarck and his menaces ; besides which, the true Parisian has an innate pleasure in doing something to shock his simple-minded European neighbours, and mystify posterity. English *amateurs*, if they exist, of Theodore de Banville's poetry, may perhaps be amused with the following reflections inspired in verse by the fate of the interesting "vermin" which the "White Cuirassier" Count Bismarck-Schönhausen compelled us to devour.

## ODE TO THE RATS.

Dans un coin reculé du parc,  
Les rats assis sur leurs derrières  
Regardent Monsieur de Bismarck  
Sous les ombrages de Ferrières.

Les yeux enflammés de courroux  
Et lui tirant leurs langues roses,  
Les petits rats, blancs, noirs et roux,  
Lui murmurent en choeur ces choses :

Cuirassier blanc, qui te poussait  
À vouloir cette guerre étrange ?  
Ah! meurtrisseur de rois, c'est  
À cause de toi qu'on nous mange !

Mais ce crime tu le paieras,  
Et puisque c'est toi qui nous tues,  
Nous irons nous les petits rats  
En Prusse, de nos dents pointues,

Manger les charpentes des tours  
Et les portes des citadelles,  
Plus affamés que les vautours  
Qui font dans l'air un grand bruit d'ailes.

Tu nous entendras dans le mur  
De ton grenier où l'ombre est noire  
Tout l'hiver manger ton blé mûr  
Avant de grignoter l'armoire.

Puis nous rongerons l'écriteau  
Qui sacre un nouveau Charlemagne  
Et même le rouge manteau  
De ton empereur d'Allemagne.  
Etc. etc. etc.

The same spirit of good humour in which Paris submitted so cheerfully to the real hardships and privations of the siege, removed, as by enchantment, the almost insuperable difficulties which had hitherto beset the path of Government. The National Guard obeyed with alacrity the decree which mobilized for active service at the outposts the youngest and most efficient portion of the civic force. Our "Pessimists," and "Redditionists," did penance for their sinister predictions of the preceding fortnight by out-heroding the *outranciers* on the boulevards. M. About, two days ago the most popular man in Paris, when he threw the "decent drapery" of his prose over the



ugly nudities of our moral situation, came to be looked upon as the sole responsible promoter of what he had only been the successful accomplice. M. About is a butterfly-hunter whose net rarely secures the butterfly he chases—popularity. Even the grave and sober *Débats* forgot to urge the necessity of convoking a National Assembly, and the Government obtained a lease of unquestioned discretionary power. Paris, for the first time, began to believe in her governors,—at least, she abstained from abusing them since she now awaited her deliverance from without; all criticism or expression of doubt was suppressed by a system of moral ostracism, and those who from the very outset of the siege had considered the whole defence of Paris as a sham, or, at the best, as a demonstration to save the honour of the capital, joined in the common cry of victory, and reserved their opinions for another opportunity. This undercurrent of opposition to the war existed, in fact, during the whole time of the siege, and it was much stronger than historians will in all probability be led to infer from the records before them. The leading writers of the popular press have been generally looked upon as men of warlike tendencies, endowed with a large share of illusions; but the truth is, that from the very first, with the exception of a few ultra-Republicans, the press remained what it had been under the Empire—profoundly sceptical, and sub-

ject to the same corrupt influences which make it the ready tool of any Government: besides this, it lived on flattering Parisian vanity and Parisian delusions with small gossip about the war, adventures of Sergeant Hoff, and the like. To feed the taste for scandal, there were at this time numerous versions of the financial exploits of Messrs. Laurier and Gambetta at Tours, in reference to the Morgan Loan, which gave M. Ernest Picard an opportunity for attacking his absent colleague, and displaying by contrast his own qualifications for the post he filled in his Hôtel des Finances.

*Wednesday, 16th November.*—There is a great stir of heavy artillery in the direction of the southern forts and earthworks. Round by Auteuil, a captive balloon is hovering over the French lines, studying, no doubt, the Prussian positions, and who knows?—watching to detect in the distance the sign of armies advancing to our relief. Parisians are busy with maps, and are becoming very learned in geography; and now they know by what roads and valleys the combined armies of the Loire and of Brittany can effect their march. The Pessimists and Redditionists,—the new name for them since About's article,—have drawn in their horns before the patriots, whose phraseology they find it con-

venient to adopt for the necessities of social intercourse; but at times they give vent to their opinions by attacking the Government, and especially the Delegation at Tours. The journalist and lawyer world is busy with Laurier and Gambetta's reputations, the Loan of two hundred and fifty millions, and a number of private scandals therewith connected. The Empire is so entirely forgotten, that its secret papers have ceased to satisfy curiosity, and we are already longing for a peep at the private correspondence of the present Government, which might possibly reveal some romantic episodes with a great many army-contracts devised in the style of the best days of Morny. The report of an anti-Gambettist movement at Tours is gaining ground in well-informed circles; it would appear that MM. Daru and Buffet are combining with M. Thiers in an intrigue against the Dictator. Thoughtful people look forward with dread to the final issue of the siege, when our communications with the provinces will be at length re-opened: with what endless recrimination we shall face each other—Parisians and Provincials—brought suddenly together, the gulf between us widened by these long weeks of blockade. The country will accuse Paris, Paris will accuse the country of the war and its disasters. The "rurals," as we begin to call them, encouraged

the Empire to a war with Germany, by voting blindfold the Plébiscite of May: Paris will have aggravated the catastrophe of Sedan by imposing on the country an incapable Government of its own exclusive creation. What can one do in a siege but philosophize? like La Fontaine's philosophical hare in his burrow: so we philosophize dismally on the future of France. There are some to whom she seems to be in the last crisis of her malady of 1789—a revolution which has made all government impossible, the people having been spoilt by flattery, universal suffrage, plébiscites, and other hypocritical concessions of the ruling classes. Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles form, as it were, a Red Trinity, with a populace at the service of briefless barristers, literary hacks and broken down adventurers. Any Government established in one of these three cities for its capital must, sooner or later, inevitably fall; it is a mere question of time, and, as Count Bismarck said of Strasburg to Jules Favre—a simple mathematical calculation. Each successive Revolution, that of 1848 in particular, widened the breach between the provinces which endured it and the capital which imposed it; but instead of asserting their own rights by civil war, like the Vendéans in 1793, the peasants remained at home in their few acres of land, grew sulky, indifferent,

and egotistical: the head and heart of Jacques Bonhomme are become more wooden than his *sabots*. This, in retaliation of the wrongs which he suffered from the despotic unity of monarchical and revolutionary centralisation. The provinces, sacrificed in matters of local and provincial interest, became more and more indifferent to the general interests of the country. The patriotic spirit was weakened and the national life was growing cold. At present the provinces are evidently in greater dread of the Republic than of the Prussians. The siege of Paris, drawn out to such a length, is a master-stroke of Bismarckian policy. Paris, cut off from all communication with the country for the space of three months, implies the disintegration of France. All that latent anarchy, fostered by a century of revolution, will come to light in a great and universal outburst. The purely passive resistance with which the provinces have met hitherto the tyranny of the capital will become an active resistance. North, west, and south, will separate and form a system of independent states. It is an illusion to hope with the Orleanist party that the country and the towns will consent to drop their differences and unite their efforts to prepare the revenge of France against Prussia. The preparation for such a mighty national undertaking may possibly

raise questions, on which the split may come. No doubt the invaded provinces will produce some two or three generations of Prussian-haters, but wherever the brunt of the war has not been felt, the burden of a National Army will create rebellion. Already, in this present struggle, there are but too many signs of unwillingness on the part of provincials to follow the lead of Paris, and associate themselves with its defence. The Mobiles cannot understand why they have been brought here "from distances of so many hundred leagues to defend the Parisians." The only armed force which is conscious of a direct interest in the siege, is one which reserves its patriotism for sham revolutionary exhibitions in the heart of the capital. The Parisians are an object of detestation and suspicion to the troops of the Line and especially to the Mobiles. Scrimmages between Moblots and Guardsmen are of daily occurrence in the wine-shops near the Hôtel de Ville, where a battalion of Bretons has been quartered. The Bretons swear that they will no longer take part in any sorties or fight for the "Parisians and their Commune;" and when a Breton takes an idea into his head, it sticks there. One of their countrymen in the National Guard shocked his Parisian comrades at the ramparts, by declaring that he was a Breton, and would not be fool enough to remain in

Paris once he could put his foot out of it. "Ah mille fois non ; pas si bête ; I shall go back to my own country." Naval officers are indignant at the inconsistency of the Parisians, who begin by declaring for war to the knife, and then skulk behind a provincial army, which is to bleed and suffer, in order that posterity may add one more myth to all the myths invented about 1793, and repeat that Paris maintained a heroic defence which did not cost one drop of Parisian blood. They have the greatest contempt for such novelties as the election of officers by their own men, which have made all discipline impossible in the ranks of the National Guard, and have spread the contagion to the regular army. Some of them, in the bitterness of their heart, declare that they would be well pleased to see Paris blown to pieces by the Prussian shells. All this pent-up hatred prepares in the future a deadly and irreconcilable strife between the civil and military elements in France, already so jealous of each other, and will result in savage massacres on the boulevards. Civil war is apprehended on all sides ; only the more hopeful think that it will be staved off until the siege is over.

*Thursday, 17th November.*—Citizen Pyat demands in his black-bordered sheet, the *Combat*, peremptory explanations of the Government. General Trochu

confessed the other day that he did not read the newspapers—a wise resolution for a man who cannot have much time to waste ; but if he did, what would he think of the following question put to him by Félix Pyat. “Is it true that Trochu’s plan, if he has indeed a plan, consists in an attack on Choisy-le-Roi, as the Governor’s frequent visits in that direction would seem to indicate, for if such is really his intention it will simply be a holocaust of patriots.” The “patriots” are parading as unconcernedly as ever. General Clément Thomas, who, since the 31st October, has succeeded General Tamisier in the chief command of the National Guard, seems to have taken his work seriously in hand ; he displays great activity in organising the war-battalions, and is to be seen every day coming down the Rue de Rivoli on horseback, at the head of a battalion, which he inspects on the Place Vendôme, in front of his head-quarters. I met this afternoon a great number of these mobilised companies marching towards the “Place” with their bands, playing in a most spirited style the “Marseillaise,” which of late has grown unfamiliar to our ears. I thought they were going to some grand review, and I asked one of them where it was to be held. “There is no review,” he said ; “it is only General Clément Thomas, who is taking an airing.” The General wore a plain blue woollen coat, fastened



round his waist by a black leathern belt, endeavouring no doubt, by his example, to eradicate from the citizen-army the love of military finery and gold lace.

*Friday, 18th November.*—Another grand review of the National Guards, in the Avenue of the Champs Elysées, and on the Place de la Concorde. These reviews are the most striking feature of our besieged life, since the news from Orleans, which brought us out again from our nooks and corners into the public walks and boulevards, which play such an important part in sustaining our patriotic enthusiasm. We crowd in great numbers to watch the manœuvres of the war-battalions, and admire them as they move past at a quick step, proudly conscious of their military appearance, each man taking a side-look at his comrade in the ranks, and now and then stealing a glance at his own toes. “See how wonderfully they drill!” says an old man. “Ah! Frenchmen are born soldiers; you see we have a love for glory and liberty. These are men who but a few weeks ago hardly knew a chassepot from an elephant; now they drill like old troops, and what is better still, they keep admirably steady under fire, and against odds.” I see them merely marching down the Avenue of the Champs Elysées, against no odds, and under no fire, save that of the glances of admiring *belles*, who have come to see Alphonse at drill; but

then, I suppose, I was not born for *la gloire*.

Clément Thomas was on horseback, amidst a numerous staff of young dandies, lounging gracefully in their saddles, and apparently unable to understand their General's orders. The General gesticulated and grew fidgety with repeating his commands, the aides-de-camps caracoled in the wrong direction, companies moved up and down in confusion until the band came opportunely to their relief by striking up the "Marseillaise," and all our heroes marched off to its invigorating sounds. My friends in the war-battalions assure me that their *moral* is excellent. They have great confidence in General d'Aurelle, the idol of the day, whose busts and portraits appear in every window. People who have known him describe the victor of Coulmiers as a stern, unflinching martinet, of the school of Marshal Castellane—a man of strong animal spirits, with the rugged, choleric temper of his mountainous Lozère. The wild vagaries of his youth, which seems to have been what is called here *orageuse*, have left traces which complete in d'Aurelle de Paladine the type of what the Celtic soldier is accustomed to recognise as the very ideal of a General.

People are at length beginning to believe in a concerted "plan," which the provincial levies are carrying out by manœuvring on the flanks of the German

armies of investment, so as to cut off their supplies, and finally close in upon them from every quarter, while we sally forth and pierce through their lines. Kind-hearted people, who must always be pitying somebody, or something, are already sighing at the thought of the sad and fearful havoc that will be wrought amongst the Prussians by an infuriated peasantry, when the invading armies will be suddenly broken up and scattered in confusion. No doubt the "plan" is most ingenious, but it is a great pity that the one hundred thousand soldiers of Prince Frederick Charles are already on their way to the Loire. Still a plan, once conceived and worked out by ourselves, brings as much comfort, and inspires as much confidence as a victory; hence the unwonted ardour of the newly mobilized Nationals. Some of their battalions are already accoutred in the *capote de campagne*, of a light sky-blue; but, for want of cloth, various odds and ends of all possible shades and colours are called in requisition. Thus, by the side of a sky-blue battalion, you see another dressed in billiard green; a third wears chocolate brown, and is nick-named by wags "the battalion of Monsieur Devinck," the chocolate manufacturer; the men are reminded of the duty their patron's livery imposes on them—"De-vainc-[re] ou de mourir."

*Sunday, 20th November.*—Methinks I begin to see th

end of all this preparation for the deadly struggle.

A whole brigade marched out yesterday morning to the south, where great concentrations are taking place ; this morning again, the *Mobiles de l'Ain* have been replaced at Cachan by the Bretons, and there is a regular shifting of regiments in every direction. A sortie was to have taken place yesterday afternoon, under the protection of Valérien's guns, and M. D. de la G——, who returned late last night from Asnières, told us that the troops had got under arms, and were advancing with great spirit, when a counter order came. Perhaps the whole affair was simply intended as a demonstration to divert the enemy's attention. The Governor seems anxious to secure his system of defence at all points on the west, to gain liberty of action in another quarter. General Berthaut, on receiving the order to burn certain stores of wood, which the Prussians might avail themselves of to throw a bridge over the Seine somewhere between Bezons and Argenteuil, replied that instead of burning their wood, he would rather give them a further supply to tempt them across the river. Armour-plated waggons, mounted with cannon, are being prepared on the Orleans line of railway, for the attack on Choisy. The officers of Marines at the Fort of Ivry, predict a grand sortie, headed by Ducrot, who is to take his eighty thousand men clean out of Paris

through the Prussian lines. The men are to carry a hundred and eighty rounds a-piece, five days' food, biscuit, bacon, &c., with as little baggage as possible ; and good-bye to Paris : the Marines are sick of it, and will do their best to get away. There is a great deal of fighting power in these men, and if General Trochu possessed a couple of divisions of this *corps d'élite*, no doubt he would push his way through at some point ; but his army is a piece of patchwork. Experienced officers have no confidence in the Mobiles ; nor do they seem much impressed with Trochu's generalship. "Trochu," they say, "lives in an atmosphere of lawyers, and he is becoming a lawyer himself. He has made his reputation by criticism, and his unfortunate book has so thoroughly shown us up, from the general to the sub-lieutenant, that our rascals have lost all belief in us." A sarcastic sub. raises a general laugh at the expense of the Governor : "He has dipped his pen in his scabbard, and his sword in his inkstand, and when he at length attempts to draw the sword, he'll only unsheath a penholder."

*Wednesday, 23rd November.*—M. de Bismarck and M. Jules Favre are carrying on a paper war, in which it is needless to say who has the advantage. As diplomats are never so quarrelsome as on the eve of reconciliation, the peace party augurs from this inter-

change of diplomatic amenities that an armistice is being haggled for at Versailles. The *Débats* again urges the convocation of an Assembly, and the slumbering suspicions of M. Pyat's followers are excited by the countermanded sortie of Saturday last. Luckily, the forts thunder at night, as if they said: "Boum, No Armistice — bang, bang, bang, *à Versailles.*" The clubs—at least those frequented by the bourgeoisie—have degenerated into a mere farce; the public is surfeited with prosy speeches, and wants to be amused. Last night, at Valentino's, which used to be a famous cancan-booth, a seriously minded speaker took up his parable about "that heroic siege of Monte Video, which lasted SEVEN YEARS. The first year, all the horses, cats, and dogs were eaten up; the second year all the silver and plate were sold—there was not a centime of money left in the place; when the third year came, the churches and palaces were put up to auction." "I should like to know," called out a knowing little tradesman, "how they could sell the buildings if there was not money in the place to pay for them?" "In the fourth year," continued the speaker,—"Enough, enough," expostulated the audience, and a captain of the National Guard sent Monte Video with its brave defenders to the d——, and swore we hadn't time to think of those outlandish people, when

the Prussians were at 600 yards from our walls, and the National Guards were being killed for their country's sake. "I say, captain, where did you get killed?" cries a wag. The captain was groaned down, and a scene of indescribable tumult ensued.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A CHAPTER FOR "GENERAL BOUM."

*Monday, 28th November.*—At last the signal is given ; the ambulances are all to meet at the Champ de Mars at two o'clock in the morning, and the fight is expected to begin before dawn. It seems as if the decisive moment had at length arrived. Our provisions are being rapidly exhausted ; Paris begins to wear a famished look in such neighbourhoods as the Rue Montmartre and the Faubourg St. Antoine, and there are fierce and desperate faces, that remind one of the March on Versailles, in October, 1789, in those long *queues* of starving women at the butchers' doors. The people cheered the batteries of mitrailleuses as they passed up the Faubourg St. Antoine, in the direction of Vincennes. Guardsmen were drinking to their successes and quarrelling with the gunners of the regular army, who hinted that they should like to see the Nationals take their share of the fighting as well as of the rejoicing. It is confidently expected that the Prussians will



be taken by surprise, though last Friday's formal notice about the closing the gates must have certainly given unfortunate publicity to the intentions of our Generals. Besides, we knew this afternoon the hour at which the attack will be made to-morrow, and there is no reason why the Prussians should not possess the same knowledge, if they are willing to pay for it.

*Tuesday, 29th November, five a.m.*—The first time that the cannonading round Paris has kept me awake. At first I heard a rumbling sound like thunder in the distance. Gradually, as I woke, I saw, from my bed, the dark sky lighted up with flashes in every quarter. Surely, I thought, this must be something more than the casual artillery performance which, for the last six weeks, has been given chiefly for the benefit of Parisians. I muffled myself up and went upstairs on the roof, which commands a splendid view of the whole range of heights between Mont Valérien on my right, and the Seine towards Ivry on my left. Red tongues of flame were darting from the cannon's mouth towards Bagneux, and the great booming of distant guns came up from the east. The night is pitch dark as I write, and the roar of cannon is incessant. This is no doubt some terrible artillery duel, preparing the way for a desperate rush of infantry.—I wonder

how the Mobiles of Gentilly and Cachan are passing these dreary hours of darkness, with the shells hissing and screaming over their heads, before the morning light gives the signal for the columns of assault to leave cover, and sweep onwards on that terribly open ground between their trenches and the Prussian barricades at L'Hay, Chevilly, and Thiais. I confess to a lurking sympathy with cowardice at four o'clock in the morning—that most unpleasant moment of existence, when life has to be faced anew, when the heart sinks under the burden of anticipated miseries, the moment which justice with refined torture has appointed for the execution of criminals, and when the death rattle is oftenest heard in the sick-chamber. French troops are, I believe, very impressible to this kind of feeling; for I always find in the history of past wars that they have fled on being surprised at dawn, while preparing that *café noir*, without which a French soldier cannot go into action. So I feel more pity for the combatants than I would at any other hour of the day.

*Eight, a.m.*—We have just seen General Ducrot's proclamation to his troops; it sounds very brave and stirring, accompanied as it is by the thunder of artillery. The General vows that he will only come back to Paris dead or victorious: he evidently feels

that he has to do with raw inexperienced troops whose discipline is not firm enough to lead them into the brunt of the battle up to those terrible loopholed walls, and his language is a desperate appeal to their courage, "May that secret rage which burns within my breast fill yours also, and inspire you with the contempt of death." He alludes to the "heroic efforts" of the army of the Loire; but the word *efforts* has an ominous sound in a General's mouth. The Government is evidently determined to do battle for the delivery of Paris; news of the greatest importance must have come in from the provinces, which compels General Trochu to make his final venture this week. Last Friday night, some English papers were brought in, and were placed in the hands of the Government; this time, no extracts from them were communicated to the press. Probably, they contained disquieting intelligence with regard to the movements of General d'Aurelle de Paladine, who must by this time already be engaged against the forces of Prince Frederick Charles. Our Parisian army is not yet ready; not one half of the mobilized National Guards are as yet equipped, and the other half is hardly prepared to do more than appear in the background of the fight; but if Paris now were to remain inactive, she might never recover an opportunity for action. The

destruction of the provincial armies would tighten the circle of iron which surrounds us. So, ready or not ready, we must take the plunge, and Ducrot dashes forward with the energy of despair.

*Tuesday Evening.*—The result of this morning's fight is not yet known. I have not been beyond the ramparts, but I went up in the afternoon to the Orleans Gate. I found all the approaches strictly guarded by pickets of National Guardsmen, and a great crowd anxiously waiting for the arrival of the wounded. Of these only one appeared while I was there, a young linesman belonging to one of the newly-formed regiments. We took off hats as he passed, and the poor fellow, who looked deadly pale, acknowledged our salute with a sickly smile. The people seemed not to have quite made up their minds as to the result of the fighting; but they spoke vaguely about Choisy-le-Roi and some other village as having been taken; batteries had been stormed at the point of the bayonet, but the cannon, for want of horses, could not be brought away. A National Guard had been positively assured by his captain, while on duty at the ramparts, that sixty heavy guns had been captured and the village of Choisy occupied. Others spoke only of eight, and said that they had been so often disappointed, that they preferred to wait before giving vent to their

joy. The most general account in the absence of official information is, that the fight was only a partial one, and that the real business of the campaign will commence to-morrow. There is a great impression of relief in every quarter, caused by the prospect of a speedy termination of the siege: the mass is sanguine of victory, and the "Pessimists" are ready to welcome an irretrievable defeat that would put an end to the present state of things.

*Wednesday Evening, 30th November.*—The last guns of the eastern forts are booming monotonously at long intervals in strange contrast with the sixteen hours' uninterrupted roar of artillery which we awoke to in the night. Ducrot's attempt to cross the Marne, which failed in consequence of a sudden rise of the river on the previous morning, has at length succeeded—and oh! what a strange thrill ran through me as I read the words: *Toutes les divisions du Général Ducrot ont passé la Marne*, on my way to Vincennes,—but the loss of twenty-four hours, determining the failure of the attack on Choisy-le-Roi, bodes ill for our success. Twelve mortal hours we have passed since dawn in a state of nervous and irritable impatience, which the Government is doing its best to quiet by reminding us that the operations, undertaken for the delivery of Paris, are of such an extremely complex nature, that we must be prepared

not to feel uneasiness at any *feint* movements of retreat: every two or three hours, a short bulletin is posted up with despatches dated from the scene of action by the Governor himself, who is no doubt in a mood to welcome danger and death in the field, as a relief from the weary perplexities of the council-chamber. The latest news is not very encouraging; however, it is some consolation to know that the first Prussian line between Champigny and Brie remains in the hands of the French, and the commander-in-chief considers that the "end of the day was good." Coming from such a quiet, sober man, these last words carry conviction with them, and General Trochu is, no doubt, entitled to be believed when he claims a partial victory. But some episodes of the day are peculiarly unfortunate, as evincing the want of solidity betrayed by the troops. Thus, a strong diversion was attempted this morning against the heights of Montmesly, in the angle of the Seine and the Marne, a position of great importance, which, if it had been held by General Susbielle's division, would have probably enabled the French to turn the enemy's positions at Chennevières and Coeuilly, or at any rate to impede his communications between the left and right banks of the Seine. Montmelsy was carried before noon by General Susbielle, but a field-battery of the Würtemberg army-corps, with a

battalion of riflemen, sufficed to put the whole division to the rout, and tumbled it into the village of Créteil, where the French barricades were actually destroyed, to afford a passage to the ambulances: so sudden and irresistible was the panic. It was here that a brave officer, General Ladreit de la Charrière, fell, pierced with many bullets, in the attempt to rally the fugitives. At Champigny, the French artillery, while debouching from the village by a single road, was enfiladed before it could deploy by the enemy's fire, and for a long time was unable to get a single gun into position. A rout seemed inevitable; luckily the officers succeeded, at the cost of their lives, in keeping the men together. Later on, General Renault, the heroic commander of the second corps of Ducrot's army, had his thigh smashed by a shell at the head of the disbanded Mobiles of Normandy, whom he vainly exerted himself to rally and bring forward to the attack of the Saxon positions on the slope between Brie and Villiers. The mortality amongst officers is fearful, especially in the Mobile regiments, and tells a sad tale of their failure to make an impression on these raw and inexperienced troops. The Line, and more particularly the Zouaves, burning to wipe out the stain of Chatillon, seem to have met the enemy on more honourable terms; but their discipline must have

been sadly at fault; for one could see the columns of assault melting away at both ends, as crowds of unwounded men dropped out of the ranks under various pretences, and took the ambulances by storm. Meanwhile, the Mobilized Nationals were massed in the third line, as an "imposing reserve:" they consider their part is to look on, and keep the Mobiles up to their duty. It is wonderful to see how easily they can cheat themselves into the belief that they are taking a more active part in the proceedings than newspaper-correspondents and sight-seers, who smuggle themselves outside the walls in ambulance carriages, to see what a battle is like at that safe distance, which kings and emperors, and even journalists prefer.

*Thursday Morning, 1st December.*—We have had a fine starry night, undisturbed by the sound of artillery, and the frost, this morning, is most keen and bitter. General Trochu, if he has not succeeded in bursting through the Prussian lines, has at any rate established a footing beyond the Marne and a basis for fresh operations. Again, we ask what news from Orleans? Now Gambetta's last despatch represents the Army of the Loire as having its centre strongly established in the defensive positions of Chevilly, Cercottes, &c., and we are waiting for its right wing to wheel up to the forest of Fontainebleau. Mean-



while, Trochu preserves a purely defensive and expectant attitude on the Marne, except that Admiral Saisset's naval guns at Avron are taking occasional shots at the Saxon convoys on the roads that converge towards the village of Chelles. Well may we pity those poor linesmen and Mobiles who have slept for these last two nights on the bleak hills above the Marne, exposed to the biting east wind, without even the comfort of their blankets, which they left behind, so as to be less encumbered in their desperate attempt to force the Saxon lines. Such a want is not to be supplied all at once in a moment, though waggon-loads of blankets and accoutrements of various sorts, knapsacks, &c., are being continually despatched to the front; but there is only one main road by which they can travel, and that is the Vincennes Avenue, which, during yesterday's fight, was blocked up and rendered almost impassable for want of an efficient military police. It is a question whether all these stores will reach the troops in time to be distributed this evening; and a few more such nights of exposure to this bitter cold without proper covering would result in the utter demoralization of the army under General Ducrot's command.

There is a weary sameness about all these battles, that soon dispels any interest they may have at first

awakened. War, as carried on with the help of field-telegraphs by commanders of Count Moltke's genius is a simple mathematical problem of the same order as the construction of a bridge, or the working of a steam-factory: by such masters of human mathematics, the power of resistance which a well-trained and highly-efficient battalion can oppose during a given time to the assault of a given force of infantry and artillery, admits of being as accurately determined, as the resistance of an arch to a given weight is calculated by an engineer. One question, and one alone, I confess, hurried me yesterday with unusual haste to the scene of action, and that was the doubt whether Count Moltke's elaborate clockwork might not for once be at fault, and whether the number of men mathematically necessary to defend the first line of investment, until the reserves could converge from north and south to snatch the fruits of victory from Ducrot's exhausted battalions, might not be found wanting at the critical moment on the two or three miles of ground beyond the Marne. I was not long in perceiving that the silent Moltke had again achieved what in man is most godlike—Infallibility, and I saw the devoted city fast bound in the fetters of Fate. The abstract mathematical problem has assumed clear and definite shape on the Marne: the drama of human passion, the terrible Unknown of

Paris, is beginning at home. The guns of Avron may slay their thousands without changing one iota in the purposes of Fate ; but what may not come in the street of the fierce, relentless, feminine craving for miracles, the madness of impossible desire ? Here is the enigma, here the interest of the war. Instead of going several miles to strain my eyes in staring at a clump of trees or an earthen mound, I choose to stay at home and watch the progress of the moral reaction of the outside on the inside : how will this nervous, *sudden*, versatile people that passes with such tiger-like transition from the frenzy of hope into the wild-beast torpor of prostration, and again lashes itself into the fury of despair—how will it greet the return of Ducrot's soldiers from the Marne with the fatal word of "Treason" on their lips ?

*Thursday Evening.*—I spent the greater part of the afternoon in some of the most populous districts, and walked up the never-ending Rue de Rivoli and Faubourg St. Antoine, as far as the Vincennes barrier. Was it simply an effect of the bitter east wind, chilling even Parisian vivacity into silence, or of intense emotion, which held the people tight-bound ? I never saw Paris more silent since the beginning of the war ; there was less boasting, less brag than usual in the dense groups that gathered in the public thoroughfares. The people seemed grave,

thoughtful and collected. Some there were, indeed, who, truer than the rest to their native propensities, were seriously discussing the chances of internal discords between the Prussians and their South German allies: firing had been heard a few nights ago towards Chatillon in the enemy's camp, the old feud of the North and the South had revived, and Saxons, Würtembergers, Bavarians, would surrender rather than lay down their lives to feed the vanity of a Prussian despot—such were the illusions, *à la Gramont*, with which a conceited *bourgeois* from the Rue St. Denis was endeavouring to amuse the workmen of the Faubourg St. Antoine; but I noticed that few of them chimed in with the speaker. Their thoughts seemed to be elsewhere; the eager anticipation of victory was sobered by the presence of the melancholy realities of war. Files of cabs with the Geneva cross were coming down the main streets, and omnibuses with great daubs of blood on the washed-out layer of yellow paint. Then, presently, an open carriage would rattle merrily along in which a Zouave was disporting himself with his friends, and exhibiting to the crowd a needle-gun or a Prussian helmet. Further on, a railway-omnibus, full of wounded Mobiles, had halted in front of a wine shop, and "Mother This," and "Mother That," had left

her snug little *loge de portière* and come out to lavish her attentions on the sufferers, whom she plied with food and drink—the peasant's panacea—endeavouring to impress the not unwilling Mobile with a sense of the medicinal virtues of a "bon verre de vin," administered in season. An armistice of a few hours prevailed on the eastern front, to allow of burying the dead and attending to the wounded, of whom too many have passed a long night of agony in frozen pits and ditches; but the idea even of a momentary truce rankled in the Parisian breast: we consider it highly derogatory to our own dignity that the Prussians should be allowed even two hours' respite from the slaughter, as if every moment hurled its thousands into the abodes of Hades. A lieutenant of the National Guard had returned laden with booty from a visit to the battle-field of Villiers, and he showed us amongst other trophies a bayonet, a soiled blue cap, and a tin cartridge-box crammed with cigars, the property of "a Prussian officer of the Royal Guard," a fine tall young man, "so handsome," whom he had found with two of his comrades lying flat on the floor of the same room in a pool of their blood, all three killed by the same shell. He laughed as he smoked the cigars "du Prussien," and seemed to enjoy them all the more for belonging to a dead enemy. He was very much impressed with the

heaps of empty bottles which he had found strewing the ground in the enemy's lines, and he seemed to think that Messieurs les Prussiens knew how to make good cheer with the wines of France. Mobiles were returning with huge cabbages, the sight of which proved almost a greater attraction to the crowd than a score of Prussian prisoners. And here, I must confess, that I did long for one of these crisp juicy-looking vegetables which their owners declined to part with, and I envied the delicious *soupe aux choux* that was to be made of them the—*soupe aux choux* which gladdens the trooper's heart when he hears in the morning the call of the bugle repeating to him in the poetry of the barracks :

La soupe aux choux se fait dans la marmite,  
Dans la marmite se fait la soupe aux choux.

Ah Paris, *mon pauvre vieux Paris*, with whom the world, in spite of itself, can have none but a lover's quarrel, I grieve to think of you as I saw you this afternoon. You, the "city of pleasure," put on diet and bled ; you, the capital of Voltaire, Americanized into an hospital-booth : I loathe the sight of your red crosses that set me thinking of pestilence ; I hate the ceaseless clatter of your ambulances, reminding me of so many butchers' carts, with just the very same faint odour of meat fresh from the shambles. The streets are dark, the shops close at sunset, or

the few that remain open are lit with petroleum that makes me long for gas. It is impossible to find a friend at home; and every man I meet is doing, or pretending to do, something. If I go to the café, I am taken by the button-hole, and compelled to listen to cock-and-bull stories of this calibre :—"A regiment of Prussian Cuirassiers charged a regiment of Mobiles down the slope by Villiers: the men got their muskets ready at the 'Present,' but when it came to the word 'Fire,' there were no more Cuirassiers to fire at; a battery of mitrailleuses had done the trick." Heaven only knows how much good powder and shot was squandered yesterday. We are getting surfeited with all these battles, just as, a fortnight ago, we were surfeited with the monotonous cannonade of the forts. I wish I knew in what halfpenny print of antiquity the first halfpenny-a-liner invented the 'Poetry of War:' to us who live encircled by the thing called war, it seems simply to consist in packing up, marching with a load on one's back, shooting at a line of men instead of a target, and clearing the ground: the business of a packer, an undertaker, and an hospital-dresser combined. As for the enthusiasm and warlike ardour of the troops, all this sounds very well at a distance, and makes splendid *copy* for the printer: practically, when troops get more than they give, they run away, while their officers look each

other hard in the face, and light a cigar to appear unconcerned. Courage is simply the attempt to persuade the man standing next you that you are not afraid. But I see I have been moralizing all this while instead of chronicling the "Grete and Horrible Battayl which the Allemaings and Franks dyd by the Marne:" be its dullness my apology.

*Friday, 2nd December.*—Again, early this morning, the everlasting cannonade woke us from our slumbers, and increased every moment in intensity, as the east wind bore the sound to our distant neighbourhood. I left home towards noon, with my mother, who was very curious to see what a battle was really like. The din was something fearful; the sun shone bright and cold against the dull leaden sky; the bleak east wind swept the streets, raising columns of dust; there was something mournful in the day: it is hard to face death when the glass is at so many degrees below freezing-point. We met at our door a youth half equipped as a National Guard, who told us he was going to the Fort de L'Est. He asked us the way, and suddenly burst into tears, saying that he had just taken leave of his parents, and that he felt sure he should never see them again. He was one of those short boyish-looking lads, a specimen of what the conscription annually produces in the large towns of France. We tried to cheer him by the



often-repeated assurance that he would not be in much danger at the fort, and that he would soon return to his parents ; but the poor fellow was not to be so easily comforted, and he went on his way weeping bitterly. A number of cabs, with the dismal red-cross, were bringing back Mables and linesmen to the Necker Hospital, close by, in the Rue de Sèvres. Two of these had stopped at the door of the Convent, which bore an imposing Geneva flag over its gate. A major of the Garde Mobile, with his right arm in a sling, was making vain and painful efforts to get himself out of his narrow *fiacre*. The crowd stared stupidly, but, as usual, offered no assistance. He leant on my arm as I helped him out of the carriage, and I took him into the Convent. His eyes were haggard and bloodshot, his cheeks pale and sunken ; he seemed utterly broken down by his sufferings, as he staggered into a ground-floor ante-chamber, which served as the *parloir* of the Convent. This was a high-ceilinged, frigid room, hung with portraits of irreproachably-curled Abbés, looking very sleek and very sanctimonious ; a row of arm-chairs, which it seemed almost a piece of profanation to sit upon, was drawn up close against the wall ; no fire on the hearth to welcome the visitor, and a general aspect of forbidding conventual decorum. I helped the major into an arm-chair ;

he told us that he had been wounded early that morning at Champigny. "Don't pity me, sir," he added, with a certain bitterness in his tone, as if he felt oppressed by some painful recollection; "there are many others worse off than myself." At last, a nun came in; the major attempted to rise from his chair, making her a very low bow, and produced his card of recommendation from the Director of the Ambulances. The nun looked hesitatingly, either from indifference or from her bewilderment at having more work pressed upon her than she could manage at any rate, her reception of the major was not encouraging. "Ma sœur," said the poor man, in his most winning tones, "I have been sent about now from place to place for more than two hours, and at last I was recommended to your good, kind ladies of the Rue de Sèvres, who are so hospitable," &c., &c. The nun had been examining him while he spoke; her eye fixed for an instant on the four stripes of gold lace round his cap—the only visible sign of his rank in the army—and her features gradually relaxed into an expression of welcome.

The streets were dreary and deserted on this side of the Seine (the left), the sound of cannon grew fainter and gradually died out. We reached at last the Pont d'Austerlitz, where a great crowd had gathered to witness the landing of the wounded. Steamers with

the white flag were hurrying up and down the river to unload their cargo of mangled human flesh, or to fetch another. Cabs went on to the embankment as far as the edge of the water to receive the more slightly wounded, who could support this mode of conveyance. Chassepots and knapsacks lay piled up on the wharf in heaps that gave a dismal impression of the number of victims. The Nationals, who lined the parapet, looked silently towards the river, and many a face amongst them turned pale at the sight; their officer remarked it, and made them turn at once to the right-about. Every now and then, four carriers brought in a wounded man on a stretcher. The crowd pressed round them, like children half-scared, half-attracted, by some horrible sight. Most of the sufferers lay motionless as corpses on their stretchers. One of these I shall never forget, as he lay with both arms twisted behind his neck, leaning his head in the hollow of his clenched hands, with a glassy film over his eyes, an expression of silent Laocoon-like agony on his face, looking before him without seeing, stunned as it were and deafened by the din of the fight. Another was borne on the shoulders of two men, whose necks he clasped with agonizing efforts; his bare foot was hanging down, and a little above the ankle I observed a small red hole. During this interval

the fight seemed to have been renewed with fresh vigour—judging, at least, from the intensity of the cannonade. We hastened in the direction of the sound, which grew louder and louder at every step, and found on our way the National Guards smoking, laughing, chatting, and playing at the everlasting game of the cork.

From a terrace conveniently situated at a short distance from the ramparts, we obtained a bird's-eye view of the eastern range of hills, beginning at our extreme left with Avron, close under the forest of Bondy, and abruptly continued on our right by the plains of St. Maur and La Varenne, in the "loop of the Marne." The Gothic *donjon* of Vincennes towered in the foreground, and masked the corner of the Nogent Fort, which every thirty seconds belched forth a cloud of yellowish-brown smoke. Against us on our right, the long, never-ending screen of poplar-trees, which half conceal and half reveal in the distance the mazy windings of the Marne. Behind the poplars, the eye could discover nothing except a few faint spurts of white smoke; but we heard a great din, which seemed to spread and swell over a vast semicircle, and the ear could plainly distinguish the deep booming bass of the iron naval guns and the sharp bronze clang of the field-batteries. At times, a sudden gust of wind brought with it a growl-

ing sound, which might be that of the mitrailleuses, or of volleys of musketry fired in quick succession. Louder and louder grew the thunder of the forts, extinguishing the symphonies of the field-pieces; children stopped from their games, and clapped their hands for joy; old men and women revelled in the music of the fight. Poor innocent souls, they little suspected the true meaning of all this increased activity on the part of the forts, or they would have longed to hear the sound of their cannon receding in the distance.

A battle is at all times more imposing to the ear than to the eye, and the mere noise in itself is a pleasure and a delight to the Parisians, who enjoy so passionately the rhetoric of sound. "*Faire parler la poudre*," "*passer la parole au canon*," are phrases peculiarly French, and untranslatable in almost any other language.

Towards three, the cannonade had suddenly ceased as if by enchantment; and on reaching the Avenue de Vincennes, we found it blocked up by a crowd that made further progress impossible. The National Guardsmen were vainly exerting themselves to keep the carriage-road clear for the endless files of carts and vehicles of every description pressing onwards in hopeless confusion to the front. We missed the silence and gravity which generally characterized the

people during the first two or three days; they had returned to their old ways, and their faces wore the usual holiday-air which Paris puts on for every tragedy of twenty-four hours' duration,—whether it be a revolution or a pestilence, a massacre or some great national catastrophe. Like a pelting shower that drenches the streets for a moment, only to make them glitter more gaily in the sunbeams, so the storm, its fury expended, clears off from the face of Paris; the gay city robes herself in her holiday-garments, and flaunts once more in the sunshine; the same everlasting loungeur and curiosity-monger, the *badaud*, whom Rabelais has pictured, "gaping at a mule with tinkling bells," and thronging ankle-high with the importunity of myrmidons around the great simple-hearted giant Gargantua: such was Paris in 1532, and such she will be so long as the towers of Notre-Dame stand in their massive strength and Parisian French is spoken on the boulevards. Had it not been for the red cross on most of the private carriages, one might have thought they were bound for the race-course of Vincennes. The crowd laughed, chattered, ran about here, there, and everywhere, like schoolboys at liberty, joked with the National Guards on duty, chaffed the sentries, drank bad coffee, ate gingerbread, picnicked in the open air—in fact, enjoyed itself as at some village fair. Four

Guardsmen were seen escorting a runaway Mobile "There's a Prussian!" was the shout, and they all rushed on the causeway, in spite of sentries and all the greatest peril to their lives from carriages and carts, to see this "Prussien." Presently a Franc-tireur was brought in, who, by way of change, was recognised as a "Bavarian." His escort took him down by a side-path to steal a march on the crowd; but the cry had been already raised, and spread from mouth to mouth, emptying the broad avenue of its thousands, who dashed wildly in every direction to catch a glimpse of the "Bavarian."

On our return, we were stopped at the entrance of the barricade which bars the road between the two columns of the Valois kings. The narrow winning passage was choked up with a thousand vehicles, ammunition-waggons, ambulances, &c., vainly endeavouring to squeeze through the elaborate labyrinths devised by M. Henri Rochefort against the Prussians, and which only serve to annul for the Parisian army the strategic value of all the great arteries of communication. We stood waiting full ten minutes, and naturally in no pleasant humour with M. Rochefort; but, to while away the time, listened to the talk of the Nationals, who were solving knotty questions in strategy, from their elevated position on the parapet behind the bre-

shed that mysterious impression of horror which is the secret charm of Parisian nights.

The latest news is that the Prussians, after a violent assault on the French advanced positions between Brie and Champigny, towards six in the morning have been ultimately driven back by the converging fire of the forts, the batteries of Avron, which command the Saxon line of communication between Noisy and Brie, and the redoubts of St. Maur and La Faisanderie, that sweep the opposite range of hills beyond Champigny and the slopes of Villiers. The troops seem to have behaved worse than on Wednesday: the Bretons were surprised at dawn whilst taking their café noir in the village of Brie and they fled at the first discharge of musketry leaving their officers in the lurch. Had it not been for the artillery of Avron and St. Maur, the result would have ended in a general disaster. All the circumstances explain the tone of depression which pervades the Governor's despatches. He speaks of the affair as having "done credit to the young Republican armies;" but then he adds, in a tone of despondency, that he cannot tell what the end will be—" *J'ignore quel en sera le résultat.*" Meantime remains on the defensive, an attitude fatal to the *élan* of French troops. General Trochu has tried conclusions with the Prussian line of inv



“speechified” to by their officers, that Bourbaki had occupied Senlis, on the road to Paris, and was striding down from Chantilly to take the Prussians in the rear, beyond the plain of St. Denis. The “Ambulances de la Presse” were returning from the Marne, and we jumped at once to the conclusion that they were on their way to Mont Valérien for a *sortie en masse* against Versailles. Whenever we are particularly excited, whether flushed with anger or success, our thoughts always revert to the *pro tem.* capital of “William”—à Versailles, à Versailles; strike up the Marseillaise,—and hurl Ducrot’s “hundred thousand men, from east to west, at the vitals of the foe.” What a splendid piece of stage-shifting! It reminds one of the exquisitely simple tactics propounded by General Boum to his sovereign lady of Gérolstein: “Couper et envelopper, voilà tout l’art de la guerre.” How many General Boums, with mustachios curled up to their eyes, are fiercely thumbing the maps in the shop-windows, while they trace out, with the infallibility acquired by two months of goose-step and parade, each stage of Bourbaki’s victorious progress down the valley of the Oise. “Ah, we shall soon begin to hear his cannon warming up Fritz, Bismarck, Moltke, and William in their rear.” But I see that William and his clique have taken their precautions in due time;

for as soon as they heard last Monday of Ducrot's intended attack on the Marne, they bundled out with what haste they could from the Versailles Prefecture and the Hôtel des Réservoirs, where they had been living so comfortably for the last two months, and made at once for Ferrières; but Bismarck, who tarried by the way to, witness the rout of his legions, narrowly escaped falling into the very midst of a detachment of free-shooters. Unfortunately for France, a traitorous peasant warned him in time of his danger, and the white-coated Cuirassier sprang upon a horse and galloped off to rejoin his royal master at Meaux, some twenty miles further off. Now they are probably on their way back to Berlin, with their helmets pulled down over their brows—vain conquerors, who, after reviling us as a populace, have fled at the first menace of danger. As for the peasant that helped his country's bitterest foe to a horse, we make a righteous example of him, by telling how the Franc-tireurs put him up against a tree and shot him without benefit of clergy. The press pours forth a *Te Deum* of triumph over the achievements on the Marne; even Félix Pyat, who for some time past has notably slackened the fire of his mitrailleuses against the Government, has words of milk and honey—or rather, I should say, acidulated lemon-drops—for General Trochu, whom he

tempts with the example of Washington. The *Réveil*, edited by the fierce Delescluze, professes full confidence in our success, but snarls at the generals. "We know," says Citizen Delescluze, "that the fight is kept up by the troops with unflinching firmness—that soldiers, Mobiles, and National Guards carry their heads high under the fire of the enemy; and if there is any truth in the saying that good generals make good armies, still truer is it to say that good armies can be victorious in spite of bad generalship. The army now engaged in battle under our walls is, and can only be, excellent in quality. The very diversity of the materials from which it is formed is a sure warrant of its excellence. If the *débris* of our imperfectly reorganized regiments were not at first all that one could desire, they have been regenerated in spirit by the contact of the Mobiles; nor is it at such a time as this, when the National Guards of Paris look death in the face with such calm intrepidity of demeanour, that soldiers will yield to a senseless panic." But Citizen Delescluze has an eye to the dark side of the picture, and he obscurely hints that our generals are plotting to bring about a capitulation. "Must we then fear that, profiting by the example of Bazaine, our generals have only taken to the field in order to exhaust the energies of the troops and of the people,

and to prepare them by repeated failure for a consummation very different from that which we have a right to expect? So many things have, for the last four months, baffled all our previsions, that we have learned to place our confidence in nothing." Delescluze evidently alludes to conversations of general officers, which have acquired unfortunate publicity: not long ago, for instance, a general in command of the artillery expressed himself as follows with regard to the prospects of the siege:—"We shall go out just beyond the forts," said the general, with the grim cynicism developed by his special branch of the service. "As soon as we get there, we shall be mowed down wholesale, '*nettoyés*,'—but we must make sorties for the sake of honour." French officers are, naturally, communicative; they let too many people into their confidence, and all this indiscretion is construed against them as evidence of treason. Perhaps, it would fare better for them with their fellow-citizens, if they followed the example of a certain close-mouthed admiral, whom a friend of mine asked in presence of some officers of the National Guard, while they were watching together the flight of the troops from Chatillon, what he thought of the battle? and whether it was not a sad rout—*une grande débâcle*. "Monsieur," said the admiral, in his severest tones, as

he turned sharply round upon the questioner,—“*Monsieur*, I consider it a great success ;” and the National Guardsmen, a moment before breathless with terror at the sight of the returning fugitives, went about repeating, in the words of their commander, that all was right, and that it was “a great success.”

The Government seems to put the same construction on the events now happening on the Marne, as the gallant *tar* chose to put on the rout of Chatillon. MM. Jules Favre, Picard, Simon, &c., have penned a most eloquent congratulatory address to their President, Trochu. Poor Trochu ! if one may judge of his real sentiments from the melancholy tone of his last despatches, he can hardly be in that frame of mind which makes congratulation pleasant or acceptable. Every utterance of his since the beginning of the siege conveys a painful sense of chronic depression. To feel that there is nothing really to be done—that all his efforts will only serve to stave off for a while a final and inevitable catastrophe—that Paris, with its blind ignorance of the enemy’s strength and of its own weakness, is laying up for itself such fertile stores of disappointment in the future—disappointment that will find vent in the bitterest curses and imprecations on the devoted heads of its leaders—this is certainly not a position in which a man of his heroic spirit can find pleasure in listening to the

old-womanish compliments of half-a-dozen incapable lawyers. Alas! for Trochu, the man of many sorrows, the future scapegoat of our capitulation!

*Tuesday, 6th December.*—This time last week, the prospect of immediate deliverance was held out to us by a commander who had made a pact with victory or death. On Sunday morning, we were officially informed that General Ducrot's army had recrossed the Marne and taken up its bivouac at Vincennes. Is it possible that the Parisians can bear such a cruel disappointment without rising against their rulers? Surely, their temper has undergone a change since the 31st October?—or perhaps the fighting has been spread over so many days that they have learnt a lesson of patience. But what strikes one most is their wonderful power of self-delusion; they live on hope, and their eyes, ever since Coulmiers, are turned towards Gambetta and the provinces. They are all talking of "feints" and fresh sorties in every direction. Yesterday, they would have it that fighting was going on beyond St. Denis, and the *Combat* predicted a great battle for to-day. Most of these popular rumours originate, I believe, in last week's stale bulletins which have not yet disappeared from the walls. The crowd still collects round them, regardless of the dates they bear, and the news is repeated from mouth to mouth, as if it had lost not

an atom of its freshness. Paris has not understood a word of Ducrot's second proclamation to his soldiers, in which he explains that further persistence on the Marne would have exposed them to "irretrievable disaster;" and her eyes are blind to the forlorn condition in which her regiments return after three days' slaughter and three bitter nights on those bleak hills above the Marne. The poor fellows limp past us, shivering in their thin, tattered overcoats, and dragging painfully their feet blistered by the worn-out shoe, with the unstrapped gaiter that dislocates the ankle. No wonder they look dejected, especially the Mobiles, and give short and sullen answers to bystanders who inquire of them where they are going, and in what fresh *sortie* they are to take part. With all these facts staring us in the face, the whole campaign is explained away as a *feint*—a terrible *feint* indeed that lasts through a whole week, and exhausts the moral and physical energies of nearly a hundred thousand men. General Schmitz candidly confesses that the army is in want of rest. The fact is, the troops are so thoroughly exhausted by fatigue, illness, and failure, that they will never fight again another Champigny; at least, they would require the stimulus of a miraculous success on the Loire or in the north.

A revolutionary friend assures me that General Ducrot

is on terms of intimacy with some of the "advanced Republicans," and that the plan he has endeavoured to carry into execution on the Marne was first decided upon at a kind of private council of war held by him about a fortnight ago with officers of democratic opinions and certain leaders of the Party. It is feared that a fatal jealousy may arise between these two men, Trochu and Ducrot, whose names have too often furnished of late a theme for invidious contrasts, the latter being generally represented as the leading active spirit, and the former as the undecided wavering Mentor of the defence. The tone of Ducrot's proclamation of the 28th November may seem to some a trifle *cavalier* for the Governor of Paris, whom he only mentions incidentally in connection with the cannons "provided by the diligence of the Commander-in-chief"—a rather secondary part assigned to the strategic head and organizer of the Parisian armies. I have already noticed amongst officers a tendency to disparage the one and overrate the other: perhaps Ducrot is more careful of his popularity in the camp than his somewhat retiring and self-sacrificing colleague. How bitterly he must now regret those unfortunate words, "Dead or victorious"! Yet he spared nothing to keep his promise either way, and time after time he dashed into the thickest of the fight, to bring his straggling



Moblots to the front. At last he confessed, with tears of rage, "*qu'il ne pourrait jamais rien faire de la Mobile.*"

Believers in the efficiency of the Commissariat Department will, doubtless, shrug their shoulders at the following anecdote. Last Friday evening, General Ducrot, Commander-in-chief of the 2nd Army, was obliged to send to M. Dardenne de la Grangerie's ambulances and beg the favour of a mattress to pass the night on, and a pair of tallow-candles to work by. He got the candles; but the mattress had to be fetched from Paris, and could not reach him in time. Next day, when the army recrossed the Marne, a solitary waggon, that contained the long-desired mattress, along with other necessities, was met by the soldiers coming towards them across the bridge of Nogent. "*À Paris!*" shouted the linesmen in the van; but the driver, anxious to deliver his charge, pushed on in spite of their objurgations, explaining that he had to take "the general's mattress" to Champigny or some other place in the front. "Ah! 'tis the general's mattress: well, take the general's mattress back to Paris." This raised an unfortunate laugh amongst the soldiers, who remembered, with schoolboy literality, that if the *commandant-en-chef* had promised to return either dead or victorious, he could hardly, after a retreat, be

still in want of a mattress, and least of all a mattress in Paris.

In reviewing these slips from a diary, composed in a spirit of perhaps exaggerated "Pessimism," I cannot help feeling more and more impressed with the conviction that history, at the rate it is written by newspaper-clerks and "Special Infallible Correspondents," must have a fatal tendency to dwindle all our heroes into snobs; and therefore it is a pleasure, in speaking of Generals Trochu and Ducrot, to be able to quote the words of a refined and appreciative critic, M. Edmond Dardenne,\* who has summed up for me his personal recollections of these truly heroic but unsuccessful men, in a vivid and interesting sketch :

"Generals Trochu and Ducrot, who have played the principal part in the defence of Paris, are old school-fellows, united by a solid and almost brotherly affection. They speak to each other as '*tu*' and '*toi* : ' *ils se tutoient*. Yet it is impossible to imagine two men more unlike each other in personal appearance.

"Trochu is short, thin, bald-headed, and personally unimposing. His dark moustache fails to give a bellicose expression to his quiet, thoughtful countenance.

\* M. Edm. Dardenne gave assistance to his brother, the Secretary to the "Ambulances de la Presse" during the latter part of the siege, and their duties brought them in frequent personal contact with Generals Trochu and Ducrot.

He has a horror for gold lace and embroidery, simple to a fault in his own dress. At the forts, where he took up his head-quarters to superintend the conduct of military operations, he was often seen walking about in a grey woollen jacket and tight-fitting trousers, his legs cased in a pair of enormous boots, and a velvet cap on his head. At sight of which his enemies would say, 'That's Trochu all over, with the boots of the general and the skull-cap of the priest.'

"A thoroughly honest and scrupulous man, Trochu labours under two weaknesses—a fondness for minutiae and a love of grand sentences. He is more of a pen-man than a man of action, and this is a point in his character on which there are not two opinions in the army. When he was an officer on the staff he always had his hands full of notes, reports and documents, which he was continually analyzing and annotating. An old general, under whom he served, used to say, on seeing him come every morning with some report or other, '*Ah ! mon Dieu !* we are done for ! Here's Trochu again with all his little scraps of paper' (*voilà Trochu avec tous ses petits papiers*).

"On the contrary, Ducrot is tall, robust, bony, well-knit, square-shouldered. His hair and beard iron-grey, his face resolute and energetic, his glance cold and penetrating ; short, slow, but concise and deliberate in his speech. A soldier of the truest type, he could

buckle on the massive armour of a Bayard. His expressive countenance, his reserved manner, his soberness of gesture, remind one of the typical American general in the War of the Union.

"In presence of danger Trochu has a cool bravery which none has ever doubted or denied ; Ducrot, the foolhardy intrepidity of the French blood, which endears him to his soldiers. He has remained true to the old traditions of our generals, which have, alas ! gone out of fashion in our days, and in harmony with which a commander places himself for the charge with the first rank of his men, and is present everywhere at the most deadly spots to lead them on by his example. Thus at the battle of Champigny, Ducrot's column was stopped by the first Prussian barricade. His raw young troops fell back in disorder, throwing the rear into confusion, and imperilling, at the first onset, the whole issue of the day. Then Ducrot rushes forward, rallies the fugitives, reaches the barricade, and there with his own hands pulls out the gabions, and opens a gap for his soldiers, electrified by their general's example. If the title of 'Brave amongst the Brave,' which Napoleon conferred on Ney, were, like Alexander's crown, the inheritance of the Worthiest, the title would be borne by Ducrot.

"Is Ducrot really endowed with the talents of a great general ?—is a question which it is impossible to

decide, since he has never commanded in chief. On the fatal day of Sedan, Mac Mahon, on receiving his wound, appointed him to command in his place; and, Ducrot, alarmed by a turning movement of the enemy, which it was not in his power to check, gave orders to make a retreat to a range of heights from whence he could give battle without the risk of being cut off and surrounded; but Wimpffen, who had his orders from the Emperor *direct*, and had been by him invested with the supreme command, decided that an advance should be made at once on the whole front of the army, and he met Ducrot's earnest entreaties and advice with one inflexible answer: 'The Emperor desires a victory for to-day, and we shall have it.'

"The victory we never had.

"On more than one occasion during the siege, especially in the latter part of December, Ducrot was urged by important political persons, who accused Trochu of insufficiency, to accept the supreme direction of our military affairs, but he invariably declined, on account of their friendship, being unwilling to supplant a friend, and not feeling sure, as he used to express himself, that he could do better in Trochu's place.

"Ducrot is a practical, cold, and resolute man: a great admirer of Prussian tactics, and so strong a partisan of the use of artillery, that he was even criticized for his *cannon-mania*.

"True to his Breton instincts, Trochu is an idealist, inclined to a belief in the supernatural, and he always expected to see the deliverance of Paris brought about by extraordinary means, other than those at his disposal. He entertained exaggerated notions of the strength of the Prussian intrenchments, and had but little confidence in his troops, none whatever in the National Guard. 'My great misfortune, he used to say, is that when the Prussians appeared before the walls of Paris, the only force I could oppose to them was Vinoy's division in the regular army, and in that division there were only two good regiments, the 35th and 42nd.' I undertook the arduous and difficult task of forming an army in the interior of the besieged city; I disciplined the Mobiles, without being able to convert them into good soldiers; and this work, without a parallel, accomplished—when at last I was ready to act, I found myself in presence of almost impregnable fortifications which my young army could not storm. If I had had but ten thousand of my Crimean troops, the enemy would never have carried the heights of Chatillon, and with thirty thousand of them, he would never have succeeded in cutting off my communications with the provinces; I should have kept, at least, one railway-line open.'

"Trochu believed, in all the candour of his heart, that it was impossible for him to break through the

iron circle which enclosed Paris. He was in the habit of consulting all his visitors whom he supposed to have the least acquaintance with military matters, and he would explain to them that one of the chief difficulties in his way was how to deploy a line of battle on the broken country around Paris—the rivers and heights being guarded by the enemy, and opposing a barrier that had to be stormed by assaulting columns; and then only, after a first success, the line of battle could be formed under the fire of the enemy's batteries. He did not think his troops possessed enough solidity for the execution of such a manœuvre, and he feared, above all, the moral prostration which would ensue in the city upon a disaster to our arms. This, in my opinion, is the motive which had most weight with him and prevented him from acting. 'What our troops are deficient in is *wind*'—*nos troupes manquent d'haleine*, he would say, to express his opinion of their unfitness for a continuous and well-sustained effort."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HOPE AGAINST HOPE.

*Wednesday, 7th December.*—A letter of Count Moltke's announces with soldier-like laconicism what must be an irretrievable disaster of the Army of the Loire. With such a difficult river in its rear, and the Prussians on its left wing cutting off retreat by the right bank of the Loire, General d'Aurelle's army must by this time be completely dispersed. The right wing, which, according to Gambetta's latest dispatch, was pushing forward in the east from Montargis, must have been cut off from the centre in front of Orleans. We may reasonably suppose that the whole army has been broken up in three *tronçons*, and this must have entailed upon it the loss of its stores, a great portion of its artillery, and at least ten thousand prisoners. This defeat on the Loire is clearly the counter-shock of the repulse sustained on the Marne. General Moltke mentions the occupation of Orleans without entering into details; but there is a certain practical tone in his brevity which shows that the



bare fact is enough in itself to impress the Government with a sense of the situation, and that any enumeration of trophies would be simply superfluous. Indeed, his note is an indirect summons to capitulate ; it is clear from the tone of the Government proclamation that it has been understood as such by General Trochu and his colleagues ; and, further, that the idea of capitulation, or "negotiation," (the euphemism invented since the fall of Metz) has been entertained in their councils. The Governor evidently knows a great deal more about the defeat at Orleans than can be learnt from the text of M. de Moltke's communication as it stands before us ; for there is a sly tone of maliciousness in the exquisite courtesy of his reply, when he refuses to avail himself of the means of verification placed at his disposal by the head of the Prussian staff.

I missed the scene last night on the Boulevards, when the fatal news was first received ; but I went out this afternoon a long walk in the town to judge of the impression it had produced. I find even the most reasonable people blind to the real significance of Count Moltke's despatch. They, generally, admit the truth of the re-occupation of Orleans ; but then Orleans, they say, "is not a strategic position." They forget that Gambetta, in his later despatches, attached the highest strategic value to its preserva-

tion, since he continually announced that the army of the Loire was solidly fortifying and entrenching itself in positions around Orleans, so as to secure that point against further attack. But, for all that, people shrugged their shoulders. "Bah!" 'tis only Orleans, they say, and if the army had really been beaten—*ce qui s'appelle battu*—*ce bon Monsieur de Moltke* would have spoken of nothing less than disaster and myriads of prisoners. They don't perceive that the Prussian commander is simply proposing capitulation, and that the Government—not without some hesitation—declines to capitulate at present. There were numerous groups in front of the Palais Royal discussing the topic of the day, and it is needless to say, that everybody had made up his mind that the loss of Orleans was, of itself, unimportant, and that, in reality, the possession of that town might have been sacrificed by D'Aurelle de Paladine, to forward a strategic move for the deliverance of the capital. This idea set everybody thinking, and I shouldn't wonder, if in a few days time, our version of the case will be that the Prussians fell into a cunning snare, prepared for them by the voluntary abandonment of Orleans; and that Prince Frederick Charles—who by that time will be dead and buried—has allowed D'Aurelle to steal a march on him and take the investing army in its rear at Versailles. For once in

his life General Trochu has satisfied the great mass of Parisians by his clever answer to Count Moltke, which, without directly questioning the truth of his antagonist's assertions, is calculated to attenuate the impression they might have otherwise produced. Equally successful has been his device of publishing and placarding on the walls General Moltke's letter in the original. Parisians consider themselves bound in honour to disbelieve an enemy's word, and indignant protests are scribbled in pencil against Count Moltke's signature, "Liar," and "Impostor," being amongst the mildest terms of Parisian invective. I cannot help thinking that if the Prussian policy in sending in this piece of intelligence had been simply to discourage the people, without any immediate aim, General Moltke would not, in that case, have chosen the best method of imparting the news. Anybody who knows the Parisians, would have felt that a greater moral effect would have been produced by leaving them for a fortnight in a fool's paradise, until their natural restlessness, coupled with Gambetta's silence and dark tales whispered at the outposts, should compel the Government to break the fatal news in the same blundering fashion as it broke the news of Metz. But Moltke's letter, as I have already said, is a direct invitation to capitulate: it is clear that at the Prussian head-quarters the last

move in the game is considered to have been played, and from the tone of General Trochu's reply, I should gather that he is of the same opinion: only he thinks it essential for the honour of the country that Paris should prolong her resistance, until resistance becomes a mere physical impossibility. No doubt, in the case of an ordinary fortress, the maxims of military honour coincide with expediency. Resist till you can resist no longer, is the rule of conduct for the isolated combatant playing his own humble, but necessary part, like a pawn on the chessboard which you cannot afford to lose a move too soon. But Paris, around which the whole question centres, seems to me to be in the position of a king left alone on the board, with enough room for a certain number of moves until the final mate. If further resistance in our case simply means that we are to eat up our five or six weeks' food before surrendering, why not surrender now, when M. de Bismarck would no doubt be willing to allow us *discount* for sparing him further trouble? But these are questions of military etiquette which I must not trifle with: just as the decencies of society are preserved by certain conventional forms, so the traditions which enforce and secure the maintenance of military discipline are kept alive by certain artificial rules of honour: to be "honourable," a

capitulation requires some sort of technical excuse, then the thing is done according to rule—*le malade*, to quote Molière, *est mort selon les règles*, and the self-respect of an army can recover in due time from the shock it has received.

The army has grown callous under the influence of repeated failure and the pressure of privations. We hear of nothing on all sides but drunkenness, pillage, and indiscipline. General Noel, who commands at Mont Valérien, demands the immediate institution of a court-martial in his fortress. "Yesterday," he writes, "some marauders, belonging for the most part to the Mobile, crossed my out-posts and went to Rueil to get drunk (*se soûler*, the strongest word he could well employ), and destroy property. Others, to the number of about 300, went to Nanterre, where they sacked the houses. Five of these wretches have been arrested, and I hope prompt justice will be dealt out to them. I have given orders that every person found crossing the lines shall be fired on without pity, and pillagers making a show of resistance shall be immediately executed . . . ." All this dates far back already in the history of the siege; the Francs-tireurs and the Parisian Mobiles have been a centre of contagion from which the disorder has spread to the half-disciplined regiments of the Line. As for drunken-

ness, it is universal; but this is explained by the severity of the weather and the want of food. Admiral de la Roncière places drunkards in a post of danger for several nights, and thus effects a partial cure; but no one else has succeeded like the Admiral in tempering severity with kindness. The officers are too lenient in serious matters, too fond of asserting their authority in trifles; they worry their men with small penalties, and never shoot them. Capital punishment has become a myth since Chatillon. Only the other day a soldier, condemned to death for desertion in presence of the enemy, laughed in the President's face and observed that "he must be joking" (*c'est pour rire*); that fellow will, no doubt, be reprieved like the rest, and will shoot his officer the next time he goes into action.

General Clément Thomas's report on the disgraceful conduct of the Belleville battalion at the outposts is the first official recognition of the real state of things in the ranks of the National Guard. M. Lampérière, who commands this battalion, gives the following description of it: "The elements from which this battalion is formed, and its indiscipline, have rendered it completely unmanageable. The incompetency of part of the officers and non-commissioned officers is amongst the chief causes of our disorganisation. Formed without reference to the

acknowledged rules of the National Guard, the battalion of Belleville has shown itself unworthy of the privileges it has obtained, and is only a bad example for the troops with which it comes in contact. Most of the men have refused to serve. I therefore demand that the battalion be brought back to Paris and dissolved. I also have the honour to tender my resignation of its command, finding it impossible as an honourable man, and an old non-commissioned officer in the regular army, to remain any longer at the head of such a troop. I intend to enter the ranks of the National Guard, as a private, to purify myself from my too long contact with the Belleville riflemen." By the official account it appears that, on the night of the 28th of November, two companies of the battalion mistook each other for the enemy, and began a furious fusillade which resulted in the death of three of their number, and the general dispersion of the whole troop. Some sixty of the men made their way back to Paris, "to ascertain"—so at least they said—"whether, during their absence, their wives had not been defrauded of the 75 centimes indemnity by the Government"—like the "patriots" of whom we read in the history of the Great Revolution, who refused to leave Paris and march against the Prussians until they had dealt justice to all traitors at home.

Flourens is accused of having usurped the command of the battalion during Major Lampérière's absence from the outposts, and his arrest has accordingly been decided upon. Poor Flourens ! It is only six years since he lectured at the Collège de France ; and little did we dream at the time that he would one day exchange the black swallow-tail, in which he looked so wise and professorial, for the four silver galons and high-topped boots which Belleville admired on the *tapis vert* of the council-chamber at the Hôtel de Ville, when, on that memorable 31st of October, he put himself, figuratively, in the breach and defended Jules Favre's life from the fury of his own charming Flourensopolites. But then, "*nous avons changé tout cela*" : our Republic of the Fourth of September is a great historic masquerade, in which everyone turns up as in the fifth act of a comedy. What has become of Gambetta, who perorated at the Café de Madrid, and in all the coffee-houses of the "Latin Quarter," from eight o'clock to midnight on the theme of the Revolution, until the worthy *limonadier* would gently exhort him to transfer himself and his *tribune* into the street, "because the Café shuts at midnight, and the *garçons* must have their rest." Meanwhile *Madame*, enthroned behind her counter, was drowsily nodding to the well-cadenced periods



of the future Dictator of France. Georges Cavalier, *alias* "Pipe-en-Bois"—a sobriquet suggested by the peculiarities of his physiognomy, in which by some trick of nature, eyes, nose, and mouth seem at war with each other, and a faithful reproduction of which would make the fortune of a briar-root pipe-manufacturer,—Pipe-en-Bois sat at Léon Gambetta's elbow, imbibing beer and political theories, and for his reward has been removed by balloon to the provinces, as a half or quarter of an Under-Secretary of State, to *pipe* to the rural populations. Now, all these Bohemians caracole on requisitioned horses, attended by a couple of orderlies, whose duty consists, I believe, in fetching their master's pipe, whenever he has forgotten it at his favourite café. Our friend Flourens belongs to a higher class than these unsuccessful Bohemians of the Boulevard press, having enjoyed under that distinguished physiologist, Dr. Claude Bernard, the advantages of a thorough scientific training, which enabled him to fill more or less competently for a twelvemonth his father's professorial chair at the Collège de France: only his natural tendencies led him to discover the doctrine of the Republic Democratic and Social in the facts of physiology, and his lectures, unlike his father's, who vivisected rabbits, consisted in a vivisection of the Jesuits. The Jesuits, as was to be

expected, proved less patient than the rabbits, and the result was that at the opening of the next scholastic year M. Gustave's services were dispensed with by the Minister of Public Instruction.—In taking this decision his Excellency M. Duruy had evidently ignored the wishes of the "Conférence du Lundi." The "Conférence du Lundi" was a kind of essay-club that met on Mondays—hence its name—counting amongst its members Gustave and his brother Emile, Gustave's junior in age, but senior in experience and knowledge of the world. Emile was a budding Councillor of State. There were also A——, the metaphysical Utopist, who now reveals at the Salle de la Redoute the powers of an orator; Erne, afterwards of the *Marseillaise*; a number of journalists, sonnet-writers, a couple of painters and musical composers. All of us had taken a pledge to revolutionize the art, literature, politics and philosophy of our age, and we had agreed to found a Review for the propagation of our opinions. We were met at the first step by the financial difficulty; and we searched amongst our acquaintance for a "capitalist." P—— had an apartment all to himself on the second floor in the Rue de Rivoli, received letters from fashionable actresses, smoked good cigars, and was supposed to enjoy an annual income of some 10,000 francs:

P—— was a capitalist, and for a time we cherished the fond delusion that we had found in him the patron of our Review. P—— fêted the “Conférence” weekly with refreshments in his rooms, we smoked his cigars, the poets admired each other’s verses, the painters invited the Society to their studios, the unedited many proposed impossible subscriptions for the publication of their works; and finally, the Conférence, to prove its own mortality, ate its funeral dinner in a restaurant near the Boulevard du Temple. To return to Flourens: dismissed by the Minister, he applied to the Emperor, but, failing to obtain redress, he threw himself into the arms of the Socialists, then left for Crete to study war—Cretan war—and received the baptism of fire in a cause supposed to be republican. Garibaldi set the example some thirty years ago. After many wanderings in Crete and journeys to and fro to Athens, Flourens returned at last to Paris with a staff of revolutionists who had accompanied him in his expedition. One of these, a man named Ballot, wrote a history of the Cretan war, and figured last July in the state-trial at Blois, where on conclusive evidence he was proved to be a suborned agent of the police, whom Flourens had trusted with secret funds for another police agent, the notorious Beaury, the deserter, accused of

conspiring against the Emperor's life. At the time Flourens returned to Paris, the Socialist party, encouraged by the signs of speedy dissolution every day more apparent in the policy of the Empire, was struggling into organization, mainly under the influence of the International Society, composed of working men, such as Tolain, the "Ciseleur," the real head of the movement; Varlin, the book-binder, &c. It has been my fortune to watch during a whole twelvemonth the patient efforts of these men at self education: a strange sight, indeed, to see them poring over the Latin declensions and conjugations, and endeavouring to master the difficulties of the irregular verbs with an industry and an ingenuity which, employed in some other undertaking more congenial to their tastes and mental habits, would drive into fits the prosaic humdrum *bourgeois* with his cant about the ignorance of the working-classes, attributing to want of proper education what is, on the contrary, the result of educated ambition. Such were the leaders of the so-called Socialist Party, which for the first time was organized by men of its own class, and therefore acquired more cohesion than it had ever obtained credit for under the leadership of Louis Blanc and his friends of 1848,—men who distinctly belong to the *bourgeoisie*, who know nothing about the work-

ing classes, and only use them as a bugbear to frighten parliamentary opponents. The European progress of the International Society, while it enlarged the experience of its French representatives, widened also their sphere of action, supplied them with that powerful instrument of continuous and universal agitation—money; and thus by their agency Socialism advanced from the stage of secret societies, isolated from each other and neutralized by the police, to the infinitely more dangerous stage of an universal League of Labour, which can only develope and increase in strength and in power, until some day it will crush all the monarchies of Europe. The Empire understood its enemy, endeavoured to nip it in the bud by prosecutions for supposed offences against the laws which prohibited secret societies, as well as by a system of timely concessions: by a law that sanctioned strikes, and by a still more lavish expenditure on public works that gave employment to the great influx of labourers from the country. But this was a mere hand-to-mouth policy, the *après moi le Deluge* of the Empire.

Such were the signs of the future in French politics when Flourens returned from Crete; nor was he long in Paris before he became the centre of a group of fanatics, leagued with whom he presided at different electoral meetings in the spring of 1869, and

was imprisoned for his vehement support of the most "irreconcilable" candidates. From the depths of his prison he spoke to his followers of barricades and cartridges ; and his first act on quitting his cell at Mazas was to challenge to mortal combat M. Paul de Cassagnac, who had made light of the personal bravery of democratic heroes. Paul ran Gustave through the chest, and Belleville rejoiced in the discovery of a leader who could meet on terms of mortal combat such a redoubtable master of fence as Cassagnac, the musketeer of the Empress. In January, at the time of the disturbances which attended Victor Noir's funeral, Flourens revealed his superiority as a man of action. Rochefort shook his pen at the Tuileries, and called the people to arms : when the moment came, he fainted, and spent the precious hours of action in an apothecary's shop. Flourens endeavoured to bring the people with the corpse down the Avenue of the Champs Elysées ; and that his enterprise was not so delirious as his craven-hearted coadjutors began to think it when personal danger had to be faced, has been proved by subsequent events, especially by the vote of the army in the Plébiscite of May, which clearly showed that the Line regiments could not be depended upon to repress a popular insurrection. The firmness which Flourens displayed at the critical moment, enhanced his

prestige in Belleville and La Villette, which had at last discovered their leader. The barricades of February, raised by him on the night of Rochefort's arrest, have been very much ridiculed ; but it is a significant fact, that the Imperial Government only trusted the Municipal Guard against Flourens and his followers, and that the Line regiments were parked in the garden of the Luxembourg, with the gates closed to preserve their loyalty from the popular infection. Flourens was well aware of all this hollowness in the discipline of the Imperial army, and took advantage of it to foment rebellion ; he had reporters in each barrack, and detailed in a special column of the *Marseillaise* the grievances of anonymous linesmen and chasseurs, drafted by the War Office into African penitentiaries. Thus, by the prestige of personal energy, Flourens acquired, in Paris, the recognized position of an insurrectionary general, a man of the same type as Garibaldi, and other filibusters, conspicuous for their courage and gullibility. After the Revolution of the 4th of September, he was elected by a battalion of the National Guard at Belleville, and he assumed the command of five battalions ; whereupon he breveted himself their "Major."

Dismissed by the Government on the 1st November, he left off soldiering, and was returned as "Adjoint"

to the mayoralty of Belleville by the vote ; and since the Hôtel de Ville's interference with the municipal liberties of his Arrondissement, he has been a wanderer without any military or political status. The other day he accompanied to the outposts the battalion of Belleville free-shooters, "Flourens' Own," this time as a private ; but if every colonel had a Flourens in his regiment, he would soon find his commission hardly worth that of a corporal. From the outposts he wrote to the *Combat* a letter which gives Belleville's own version of Belleville's conduct in presence of the enemy, and which Félix Pyat inserts under the title—

" FUNERAL OF THE BELLEVILLE FREE-SHOOTERS KILLED  
AT MAISONS-ALFORT, BY THE PRUSSIANS,  
ON THE 27TH OF NOVEMBER.

" We have just accompanied them to the Charonne cemetery,\* where we bade them a last farewell. They have fallen, three of them, for the Republic ; the eldest was only twenty-nine. But a few days ago I saw them full of life, of health, and of youth ; full of hope in the final triumph of the Great Universal Republic, Democratic and Social. They died as brave men, struck in the chest, after fighting for nine hours, four hundred Frenchmen against fifteen hundred Saxons. The battalion of Belleville sharp-shooters was sent on Friday, 25th, to the outposts of Maisons Alfort, where it relieved the Mobiles of the Côte

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\* " Le Cimetière de Charonne : " no doubt that of the " Père Lachaise,"—a Jesuit, by the way, and confessor to his Majesty Louis Quatorze ; therefore, no son of Belleville can repose in ground sullied by a Jesuit's name !



d'Or. They were at once despatched to Créteil, where they kept up on Saturday and the whole of the ensuing night a sharp fusillade with the enemy. No food ; and the musketry fire continued : the men had nothing to eat till four o'clock on Sunday afternoon. It was an isolated post, with no hope of succour ; the fort lay far off, and farther still were any friendly troops. Yet not one of our men looked behind him," [but oh ! Gustave, what of the sixty-one who bolted and went home with "arms and baggage," as Clément Thomas has it?] : "they had to defend the Republic, and no life is thrown away in the Republic's service, even were it sacrificed in some disastrous Bourget under the orders of an incapable general. Every Republican who falls in our cause bequeaths a legacy of heroism : his blood exalts us, his blood redeems us from the long Imperial turpitudes and the opprobrium of despotism. Sergeant Richard, who came to relieve the sharp-shooters of the 2nd Company, endeavoured to get his men under shelter—[no easy task with warriors who enjoy being under fire]—'Sergeant,' they said, 'you are exposing yourself too much.' The Saxon bullets whistled as thick as hail around him. 'Never mind,' replied the sergeant. Presently he fell ; a ball had struck him dead, and we have buried him to-day. Corporal Altenhoven and private Steff fell also. We left them lying side by side in the same grave, those three dear friends. Five other of their comrades were wounded. Poor Richard, born at Metz, was a pupil at the School of Fine Arts. A studious, intelligent, kind and gentle youth, he has joined the thousands of young, heroic, gentle victims of Bonaparte's mad fury and Bismarck's fearful ambition. Alas ! dear friends, we shall see you no more. You were our joy, our hope, our happiness ; so bravely, so devotedly did you work, burning with the generous ardour of youth for the future of mankind ; and you hoped to see that Republic for which you have sacrificed your lives—that Republic, great and sublime, which is to free all nations from their tyrants, the Prussians from their William, as the French from their Napoleon, and to weld all peoples of the earth into one vast brotherhood ; a republic in which Right and Duty shall be secured, in which woman and child, and all creatures of bondage shall be raised from their degradation, which shall dispel ignorance and found happiness on equality. This Republic you will not see ; but we who have not yet, like you, fulfilled our task, let us all swear by your noble remains to have neither peace nor rest till we have founded our Democratic and Social Republic ; let us swear to avenge you by making men even of

those slaves of Prussian despotism who have killed you, their true brethren. This is Republican revenge. Peace in the Republic to all who have the true heart of a man, and death to all tyrants !

“GUSTAVE FLOURENS.”

Poor deluded and deluding Flourens ! is all I can find in my heart to say, after reading this effusion. And this is the price of popularity at Belleville ! Flourens knew perfectly well that all this fusillade simply arose out of a panic, and that the three poor young fellows were the victims of their comrades' poltroonery : yet what a beautiful legend he has framed for Belleville out of his own imagination. I pity Harry Hotspur, condemned to act the trumpeter to Sir John Falstaff ; need I say that Falstaff swallows with a complacency truly refreshing to witness, the doses of admiration all day long administered by the press and the Government. These very same Bellevillites, whom M. Clément Thomas disarms for cowardice, were only the other day extolled to the skies, with honourable mention in the Order of the Day, the first moment they put their foot in the trenches, for the very same exploit which has since branded them with infamy. But we live under a Government that has always cringed to the mob, and dressed it up in all the cardinal virtues, treating it as a frightened child treats a mastiff which he pampers with chicken-bones and all sorts of dainties,

stroking down his shaggy sides, and when the monster growls, "Good bow-wow," lisps the child; "dear bow-wow, be good, and don't eat me." Such a comparison, however trivial, can hardly give the faintest idea of the state of infancy into which Jules Favre, in spite of his great beard, has fallen by the weakness and vanity of his character.

M. Blanqui's paper, the *Patrie en Danger*, will cease to appear to-morrow, for want of funds, and of course he does not take a pleasant view of the situation. Blanqui has been all along, from the first, the Jeremiah of the siege, and he takes leave of the Parisians with bitter imprecations on their blindness and frivolity. A pity Blanqui did not live in the days of Hezekiah, "who trusted in that broken reed,"—diplomacy: he would have written in verse, and his lamentations would have descended to the remotest posterity. As it is, his prose, printed on whitey-brown paper, will be used, this time next year, to wrap up snuff at the tobacconist's, and Jeremiah Blanqui will console himself with half-a-pint of porter in Leicester Square, unless a paternal government may have sent him to study the climate of Cayenne.

My friends of the Federal Chamber hold with Blanqui and the Clubs that, if private stores were energetically requisitioned, Paris would be provisioned for full two months more. By their account, which I believe

to a certain extent to be true, the grocers have concealed large stores in private houses, and even in ambulance-vans; thus, an ambulance carriage was found the other day to contain a whole batch of Yorkshire hams, the property of some sand-the-sugar *à outrance* patriot. If the ambulances kill eighty per cent. of the wounded, they are made a good thing of by the living. Do you wish to escape service in the field? Join an ambulance. Are you anxious to keep your feet warm on the fender, and to eat beef-steaks every day of the siege? Enlist in an ambulance. All you have to do is to let the wounded die, as they do fast enough as soon as they get into the Grand Hotel.

*Thursday, 8th December.*—The snow lies thick on the ground; Moblots and Guardsmen are making what cheer they can, and carving out snow heads and busts of Badinguet, Bismarck, and William. I saw one of Badinguet, on the boulevard, which bore a close resemblance to the original; the pointed moustachios and parrot-beak nose were the most effective traits of the caricature, and had been studied with Parisian malice. In the Rue de la Paix, some four or five war battalions were being reviewed as usual by Clément Thomas. As I passed by, I was reading a number of the *Combat*, which, by the way, has become rather dull since Félix Pyat has left off abusing the Govern-

ment in his racy, virulent style. A National shouted out to me to clear the way, and his comrades jeeringly observed that I was reading the *Combat*, which did not seem at all popular with those loyal *épiciers* of the Faubourg St. Honoré. There was a great circle round one of them, who sang, *con molto brio*, the "Volunteer's Song," a feeble plagiarism of the Marseillaise, which seems to have supplanted the immortal hymn of Rouget de Lisle. The singer was a fat, lusty-lunged fellow, who must have been in his day the admiration of some *café chantant*, for he waved his arms majestically at the end of each couplet, smiling and smirking to his audience. An old gentleman looked on in sorrow, and audibly lamented the obstinacy of the Parisians. "Mon Dieu ! what is there to be done ? Risk another sortie, which will cost as many lives, and do as little good as the last : yet every man is talking of a *sortie en masse*. Possibly the bad weather, and the sloppy state of the roads, are a hindrance for the present ; but when it shall have come off, what shall we be the gainers by it ? We shall have lost ten thousand men more, as at Champigny. The Government itself admits the loss of six thousand—say it is ten thousand in round numbers ; we shall make it twenty thousand at the next affair, and Paris will be in the same position as before. The people are

becoming obstinate, they are getting callous to the sight of blood, to privations, famine, death, and all the horrors, and we won't yield, simply out of spite—we will not allow that we are beaten." Luckily for the defence of Paris, our old friend Dr. X—— puts a very different face on the matter. He lives, or rather I should say vegetates, in a state of beatified optimism, untroubled by the slightest consciousness of failure. This morning he showed me the Official Journal with an air of triumph. "Well," said he, rubbing his hands, "have you seen the military report? We have only lost six thousand men; *la belle affaire*, when the Prussians must have lost at least double that number! Seven or eight more sorties like that, and the siege of Paris will be raised." I listened gravely, for it would have been a crime to differ from his learned opinion. But this is not the least infliction of the siege, to have to acquiesce in such pompous humbug.

*Friday, 9th December.* — So Trochu proposes an exchange of prisoners to Von Moltke! No doubt he is without news of Gambetta, who never writes unless he has something pleasant to communicate, for not a pigeon has he sent us since the 30th of November. I am willing to believe that pigeons refuse to travel in such inclement weather, and possibly there is a sense of patriotism in them that

makes them object to be the bearers of bad news.

In the absence of positive and complete information, General Trochu is, perhaps, anxious to avail himself of Von Moltke's offer in another form, and under pretext of an exchange of prisoners, he is sending officers to converse with the Prussian staff. Von Moltke, on the other hand, will be only too glad to accept the proposed exchange, and he will send us in prisoners from the Army of the Loire. The forts are very active at night; this morning a well-sustained cannonade is being kept up on the south. The weather is cold and dismal. The snow lies thicker than ever on the roofs of the houses, and on the broad avenues. I have not even the courage to go out; I am getting tired of the siege, and I stay in bed for want of fuel all the morning. Puss trots about gloomily, and yawns in a melancholy way, as if he thought the siege was going to be a long one. The poor beast has not known the taste of milk since September, and is glad to pick up stale crusts of bread, which he never would have looked at in the days of his prosperity. Every third or fourth day he devours the best half of my ration of horseflesh, and then recovers sufficient spirits to frisk about the room in his most playful manner. If he knew how often he is thought of by the people downstairs, as fricasseed rabbit! All his brethren have disappeared from the neigh-

bouring roofs, where they held their midnight orgies ; and he is left, like the last rose of summer, all purring alone, to propagate his kind, unless . . . but this is a thought too horrible to entertain. We have frequent family disputes about the prospects of the siege ; confinement and low rations make us quarrelsome. My father insists that we shall be blocked up here till the middle of March, by which time we shall be living on three ounces of bread a day ; Gambetta will be announcing fresh victories of the French Republic from some mountain fastness in the Pyrenees. The Parisians will be expecting at every moment the approach of a victorious army, and the forts will kill two Prussians per diem, until the final extinction in detail of the German armies. It is impossible to arrive at an exact notion of the amount of flour in store, but I heard not more than a fortnight ago, from a friend who is likely to know something about it, that at that time already the quantity supplied by the mills barely sufficed for our daily consumption, and certain acts of the Government suggest certain inferences. Putting all together, I should not think that the stock of flour can last beyond the 10th January.

*Sunday, 11th December.*—"Que pensez-vous des pigeons Prussiens ?" is the question in everybody's mouth, and the orthodox reply is : "Je les prends pour des



*canards.*" The pigeons bring news that Rouen and Amiens are occupied by the Prussians, who are also marching on Tours. The Government profess to believe that the winged messengers have been sent in by the enemy, alleging that the despatches are worded in an incoherent Germanic style. We have examined them, as Rabelais has it, with a double pair of spectacles, "*à grand renfort de besicles,*" and have failed to detect the slightest trace of "Germanism," except, perhaps, in the epithet of "*les diables*" applied to the Prussians; and even this is not German in idiom, though somewhat unfrench in sentiment at such a crisis. The clerks at the Telegraph Office have identified the pigeons as the very same ones that were sent by a balloon which fell a month ago into the hands of the Prussians. Be that as it may, the news they bring must be substantially correct. Such is the opinion, at least, of M. L . . . . a lawyer, who is on intimate terms with most of the members of the Government. The other day he met M. Ernest Picard under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, a few hours after the publication of Von Moltke's letter. Picard looked intensely sad, and they both began by tacit consent to talk about the weather, or the equivalent commonplace of French conversation, viz., family matters. They walked together for some ten minutes, and parted without the remotest allusion

having been made on either side to politics. M. Picard is in great grief because his colleagues refused to accept Count Moltke's offer: he has all along considered resistance hopeless; and so did his colleagues on the evening of the 4th of September, when M. Grévy put the case clearly before them at a meeting of the deputies of the Left.

But the clearest head amongst them was Picard, who has persistently declared in favour of negotiation, and has endeavoured, by throwing out occasional hints of an armistice in his paper, the *Electeur Libre*, to lull the public mind into a more reasonable mood. The other day, at the council held to discuss Moltke's proposal, Picard was for accepting, nor was his the only dissentient voice in the deliberations of the Government. The sentimental Jules Simon has evidently been won over to the policy of his practical-minded colleague, for he admitted in the presence of M. L . . . at his office, that the Prussian proposal had not been "unanimously" rejected, as the proclamation stated, thereby implying that he himself sided with the minority. Jules Simon is very sad. I myself can vouch for that, for I meet him regularly every day walking up the Rue Bellechasse, or crossing the Pont de la Concorde, on his way to the Ministry of Public Instruction. No private coach, not even a *fiacre*, for Jules Simon is a philosopher, and has written a book

about Duty, and like all our Immortals, except Jules Favre, who keeps a carriage, he goes on foot, borne down by the weight of his immortality. M. Emmanuel Arago, another of the Eleven, is often met on the Boulevard des Capucines; for Paris, the *rendezvous* of nations, is become a provincial city, in which the same faces always greet one at the same corners, and provoke the same remarks as in some gossiping University town.

The gloom of these men of the Hôtel de Ville follows them everywhere; they look as if they came from some funeral and were on their way to another. Their speeches are well-turned compliments of condolence, their acts are funeral orations. Meanwhile, Louis Blanc is weaving chaplets of immortelles and garlands of heroic legends, which he will call history, and publish in two octavo volumes, calf-bound, destined some day to reward the best rhetorical amplification in the Sorbonne of 1970. Trochu's Will is still at his solicitor's; let not History open that Will, lest it undeceive the world upon many points unfavourable to our heroism. At any rate, it is some consolation to think that, if the worst comes, we have a Government of undertakers ready to mourn over us gratis, bury us, and stereotype our fame on tablets of marble and bronze. For the present, I strongly suspect them of an intention to

ration our bread. M. Jules Ferry prohibits the manufacturing of biscuits and fancy-bread ; this looks like a preparatory measure for curtailing our allowance of flour. Disquieting rumours are afloat, and have produced a regular panic at the bakers. I had the curiosity to step into half-a-dozen bakeries in the central parts of the town and was told that all their bread had been carried off early in the morning by the people of the faubourgs. In the neighbourhood of the quartier Montmartre, I saw *queues* of revolutionary hags, whose weird faces gave one a glimpse of the Furies of the Guillotine in 1794. National Guardsmen, posted at the doors to prevent a forcible irruption of the beldames, assured me in whispers, as a positive fact, that in three days' time the bread was to be rationed at the rate of a pound a day for each grown-up person. A pound a day is what few of us eat in ordinary times, but the siege has made us grow very fond of our bread, especially as it is anything but buttered on both sides. The working-classes consume at least double that quantity ; the soldier's ration is over a pound and a half, without counting biscuit. To calm our fears, we are told it is not corn that is wanting, but the mills to grind it in sufficient quantity for our daily consumption. Still it is a hard thing for us to swallow, and the news brought in by yesterday's pigeons is a bad relish to

a pound of bread. Gambetta's and Ducrot's inaction begin to tell on the *moral* of the people, they are falling into a state of languor.

*Tuesday, 13th December.*—The weather is simply disgusting; the melted snow, mud, and rain, make Paris hideous. I stayed at home all yesterday, and whiled away the long dreary hours with M. Thiers's History of the Revolution. How differently it reads by the light of present events! M. Thiers strikes me as the only Frenchman who has seen clearly the Revolution as it was, and has translated his ideas of it into a terse diplomatic style, which you cannot read as you run. He writes under the perpetual apprehension of wounding the nervous vanity of his countrymen. *Incedo per cineres dolosos* seems to be his motto in his treatment of the more disgraceful sides of the Revolution; and much of his meaning would escape one who had not learnt to weigh the force of his expressions by the experience on a large scale of French character as afforded by the present war. In his accounts of Revolutionary scenes I recognise the Paris of 1870; they stand the test of experiment which makes other histories dissolve into mere flimsy bombast. After all, Paris was in 1793 very much as we see it now, with one great exception,—that its working classes have been tamed and enervated by luxuries at that time unknown. The

Empire has glutted them with the refuse of the rich.

High wages, fine squares to saunter in, great alcazars with rouged women to educate their sense of beauty, Therasas to howl for their musical entertainment,—all these cheap luxuries of civilized Imperial life have made of the Parisian workman a simple repetition in the blouse, of what the little boulevard fop is in his modish waistcoats. I sometimes hear a regret expressed by Revolutionists of the St. Just type, that a guillotine was not set up in the Place de la Concorde at the outset of the siege. The absence of this instrument of terror in the Republic of the 4th of September is rather a sign of degeneracy than of progress. The populace has been too much saturated with pleasure to have the nerve for guillotining; it will scratch, tear, and lacerate with the venomous ferocity of puny degenerate creatures. The guillotine, with all its atrocity, was a symbol of strength: and there is not one man amongst the fanatical leaders at present within our walls with faith enough in himself or in his followers to have recourse to such desperate means of coercion. But perhaps in dwelling on the past, I am doing injustice to the present; the truth is, that I have willingly forgotten it these last few days; for the history of human events, like the adventures of a journey, has only a retrospective interest. All I can see

now is that slowly and surely famine is approaching.

The Government has been greatly alarmed by Sunday's bread-panic, and it has drawn up as usual a proclamation to quiet the people's fears. We are solemnly assured that our bread will not be rationed ; but this does not prove that the Government had not, the other day, the intention of rationing it. I believe that they simply wished to feel our pulse before deciding to take the step, and found us not yet ripe for it. The *Siècle*, whose banker, M. Cernuschi, is a kind of confidential agent of this Government, endeavours to comfort us by an "exposé de la situation" from the semi-official point of view, and informs us that we have fifty-thousand quintals of flour and an "immense quantity of wheat." It is true that there is a deficiency of mills to grind it ; those now at work turn out four thousand quintals per diem (the daily consumption of Paris is stated at six thousand five hundred), and with the new mills that are being constructed the supply will be raised to seven thousand quintals a day. *Ergo* everything is for the best in the best of worlds ; yet, a few columns further, this very same *Siècle* eloquently adjures us to sacrifice the "favourites of the fire-side," and economise their bread to prolong our own resistance. Sacrifice my cat ! No, Puss, I will see the *Siècle* further, before I refuse to share

with you my last slice of horseflesh, and my last crust.

What most surprises me, is the facility with which people believe in "immense stores" of wheat, just as at the beginning of the siege they believed in immense stores of flour: one would have thought that the first belief having proved false would have carried away with it the second. But Paris hopes against hope, like a patient in the last stage of consumption. I know not of any phase of mind that so exactly corresponds to the present fretful, peevish, dejected and yet hopeful state, in which the Parisians have lived for the last few days.

The affair of the Belleville sharp-shooters does not seem quite so clear as it did at first: and the letter of apology which their ex-commandant Lampérière has just written to the *Combat*, only proves—if it proves anything,—that there is not much to choose between him and his men. The sharp-shooters, disarmed by Clément Thomas, held a meeting, and invited "Delegates" to attend from the other battalions, whose indirect testimony had been used against them by the authorities. The word "Delegates" looks very fine on paper, but there are enough rascals in every battalion of the National Guards to constitute an adequate representation of the whole for the purposes of Belleville. These delegates,



summoned to give their opinion as to the honourable conduct of the Bellevillites in presence of the enemy, agreed all to sign a paper, which conferred on them plenary absolution. Arthur de Fonvielle, commander of the 147th battalion of La Villette, protested against the allegation reproduced in the general's report, and according to which his men had taken such a violent disgust to their Belleville comrades that they had insisted on being separated from them by barricades at the outposts. The sharpshooters summoned their own ex-commander to attend their meeting, and this invitation having been followed up with threats by some of their party, the President recommended the assembly to receive the culprit with the calm that befitted brave men vindicating their honour. Apparently the commander objected to a "calm" reception, for he did not appear at the meeting, but wrote his letter to the *Combat*, in which he retracted all the charges he had brought against his men. Lampérière is an old exile, and as such had been received by Flourens with open arms; the greatest harmony seemed to prevail between them for the last two days at the outposts. Obligated to absent himself from his post at Créteil, the major asked Flourens in a friendly manner to replace him for a while in his command, and, on taking leave, he threw on his shoulders, in presence of the men,

his own military cloak, with the four silver stripes that indicate the rank of commandant; then rode off to head-quarters with his report already prepared in which he denounced Flourens for having usurped the insignia of command. Flourens, with his usual gullibility, fell into the snare, and gave an excellent opportunity to the Government for carrying out its long delayed purposes against him: his name is now associated with the discreditable conduct of the Belleville battalion, and his person is under the lock and key of M. Jules Favre, in retaliation for the 31st October.

Such is at least Belleville's version of the case; and I must confess that it acquires consistency when compared with the self-conflicting explanations of Major Lampérière, endorsed at head quarters.

It seems that Belleville and Batignolles were left without bread on Sunday morning, and that it was the overplus of their famished population which, pouring down on the central parts of the town, exhausted our own supply. Belleville scents "treachery" in this, and believes, or affects to believe, that the Government is wishing to goad it into rebellion, to create an opportunity for a little wholesome blood-letting. A dark plot, very dark, indeed; I suspect Belleville overrates the ingenuity of this Government: the simple fact is, we have

only just enough flour left to make both ends meet, and the means of transport at the disposal of the Central Mairie are inadequate to secure the prompt distribution of their daily supply to the bakers on the inaccessible heights of Belleville. I found the door of the municipal building opposite the Hôtel de Ville blocked up by a motley crowd of citizens, whose clothes, besprinkled with flour, betokened their profession. This was the bakers' *queue*, to whom Jules Ferry doles out their allowance day by day. Each man amongst them seemed to suspect his neighbour of an illicit connection with the authorities which allowed him to pass before his turn, and was most loud in his denunciations of privilege. We heard their bellowing from the fourth story, where I was, with one of my friends "in the Administration," who explained to me the weaknesses of that great municipality, which lives and moves and has its being in M. Jules Ferry. This personage rose to celebrity by a smart pamphlet against Baron Haussmann and his financial accounts, "*les Comptes fantastiques de M. Haussmann*," and now he lords it like a Turk in Baron Haussmann's arm-chair. "Sultan" Ferry is a tall knob-nosed person, who writes a small scrumpy hand; the contrast of his stature and his hand-writing reveals the man; his best characteristic is a certain tight-

ness of grip, which might have qualified him for the vocation of a gendarme, and which is a great requisite in the post he occupies, or rather, I should say, fills, at the Central Mayoralty of the Hôtel de Ville.

*Thursday, 15th December.*—A well-sustained cannonade, “une canonnade bien nourrie”—better “nourrie” than ourselves, was kept up all through the afternoon at various points of the southern and western front. Everybody is now talking of a great *sortie*, in which Vinoy, who has succeeded to Ducrot’s popularity, is to play the principal part. The strategists of the boulevard will have it that Monsieur Vinoy is lying in wait in the hollows under the guns of Mont Valérien, with pontoon-bridges in readiness to be thrown at a moment’s notice over the Seine, and 100,000 men waiting for the signal to dash through the thin Prussian line between Bezons and Chatou. There is not much to chronicle except another proclamation of the Government, intended to remove the lingering apprehensions of the most timorous with reference to the rationing of the bread. We are told for the hundredth time that we are an heroic people, of which we never had a doubt: only—there’s the rub—we must not be squeamish, and must make up our minds to eat black bread. Black bread is excellent! “the peasants eat no

other," and I dare say, would not, if they could. It is very wholesome for the constitution, contains, indeed, 15 per cent. of bran, which is not quite so nourishing as flour, and will admit of Heaven knows how much grit and sand to make up weight; but the Government offers it, with consummate coolness, as an improved substitute for our Parisian *pain blanc*. How cautiously, and with what tact, our medicine is sugared for us!

I saw this afternoon some two or three hundred unarmed linesmen, belonging to a dozen different regiments, whom a lieutenant of gendarmes was taking to the Fort of Vincennes. They halted on the quay by the Esplanade des Invalides, while a smart-looking sergeant marshalled them in squads according to their regimental numbers. Their appearance was squalid and miserable in the extreme; they seemed lost to all sense of shame, and submitted most philosophically to their public degradation. One of them explained to me that, in ordinary times, he would have been sentenced to at least three months' imprisonment, whereas, on account of the siege, he would only spend a fortnight at Vincennes. I inquired what had been his offence, and was vaguely told by him that he had been "found drinking with a Mobile." Some of his older comrades were endeavouring to get round their sergeant, and obtain leave,

under various pretexts, to go *alone* to the Fort; but the man with the stripes on his sleeve stroked his moustache, and looked good humouredly incredulous. I noticed amongst these *lignards*, who were simply deserters, a large proportion of men of the reserve; this contingent, mobilized by the law of the 10th August, seems to have greatly contributed towards the general demoralization of the army. Recruits can be taught to take pride in their military discipline; but veterans, who have returned for some years to the habits of civilian life, can never unlearn their disgust for the routine of drill and the tyranny of the barracks. I had already remarked in July the unsoldierly spirit of the men on furlough recalled at a moment's notice to be drafted into skeleton regiments, when I stood for hours in the Rue St. Dominique, opposite the War Office, watching the crowds that thronged round the door-way for the *feuille de route*, so unpleasantly suggestive of a long journey without return. As they came back from the courtyard they would flash the fatal sheet in their comrades' eyes, with a nervous "Off to-night!" upon which comrades would look grave; and I overheard many an expression of condoling sympathy—"ce pauvre Jean-Claude! he was back in the village on leave, and had served his full time, all but three months: only fancy this unlucky war breaking out

just now, &c." This was the style of their remarks, with very little Marseillaise, and still less enthusiasm. Torn from their village-homes, where they had already enjoyed a foretaste of deliverance from the hateful burdens of the conscription, that Moloch of the French peasantry, it was a pitiful sight to see them in their threadbare tunics with the half-filled knapsack, sauntering on the pavement by twos and threes, with none to befriend or look after them—a screw was loose at the War Office, and the *feuille de route* was not forthcoming at the proper time : hence two or three days' delay, and nights spent on the flagstones in front of the Hotel of His Excellency Marshal Lebœuf. Now and then, a good Samaritan would take them off to the wine-shop at the corner to drown their sorrows in a pint of "petit bleu." As for the War Office, it left them on the pavement, which, after all, was better than the grave-pits of Worth, Speicherén, and Gravelotte.

*Friday, 16th December.*—I had a long walk last night on the quays with my old friend Jules Andrieu, of the Salle de la Redoute, and this time I was more impressed with what I had heard from him than I had ever been during the whole siege. I was anxious to ascertain the real views of his party, and the line of conduct it was prepared to adopt since the defeat of Orleans and the failure of Ducrot's *sortie* on the

Marne; so I asked him if he believed in the overthrow of the present Government. But this he considers hardly probable, on account of the state of powerlessness to which the three heads of the Revolution, Blanqui, Delescluze, and Pyat are reduced. "Blanqui is a man of masterly genius, whose unfortunate estrangement from that Quixotic revolutionist, Armand Barbès, has cast suspicion on his character." Delescluze, he gave me to understand, plays an excellent second-fiddle, and theorises the acts of more enterprising men. With regard to Pyat, I found him less explicit, though he mentions his name with great admiration, but apparently conscious of some secret flaw. He summed up in these words: "We have now reached the stage in which individual action must be subordinate to the collective energy of groups; and these, instead of upsetting the Government of the Hôtel de Ville, should rather ignore it, and do their own work themselves: each mayor, for instance, should exert himself in his own district, and come to an understanding with his colleagues in the Twenty Arrondissements. You remember what I told you some six years ago about the necessity of giving up parliamentary opposition and organising groups of Republicans in each arrondissement whom the final collapse of the Empire should find ready to take its place. The bane of the party is distrust and



Government, we are told, has left Tours for Bordeaux, "not to impede strategic movements!"

*Saturday, 17th December.*—The *Vérité*, which has gained enough readers during the last month to appear in a full sheet, has begun to speak openly of surrender (negotiation is the word employed), and hints that our supply of flour is drawing to an end. But people will persist that we are provisioned, as far as bread is concerned, for three or four months to come. At Madame la Comtesse D——s, whose house is a great centre of Orleanism, it is positively affirmed, on the authority of no less a personage than General Trochu himself, that our bread will last till the 15th February, and even till the month of March. I asked her cousin, Madame S——, why the Government, if it really was in possession of such excellent intelligence, did not placard it all over the town, and advertise it in all the papers. "Oh, it must not be published," was the reply, "for the people might be discouraged if they knew they had so long a siege before them;" and there is, perhaps, some truth in the remark.

Dr. Alan Herbert thinks the siege is "*very slow*," and assures me that he never would have remained if he had foreseen its dulness. "Why! we shall have nothing to say when we are back in England, except that we had no beefsteaks! I thought we

were going to be bombarded ; but we shan't have a single shell to speak of!" But he is astonished at the amount of *passive* resistance displayed by the people. Europe never expected them to submit so tamely to hardships and privations ; but the Parisians have never been yet properly understood outside of Paris. Their character is too subtle and complex, too feminine, in a word, to be explained by broad generalizations from history, and must be studied on the spot, hour by hour, like the changes of a woman's temper ; it is a combination of all the weaknesses, the waywardness, and caprice, with all the intermittent heroism, which are the fruit in woman of her keen susceptibility of emotion. Before the siege began, M. Henri de Pène, the well-known journalist, put the question thus : " If Paris were to surrender, Paris would be ridiculous." Ridiculous—a word that weighs as much with Paris as it ever did with woman. The line of forts, and the moral energy of her commander, saved Paris from herself on the critical day of Châtillon, and verified in her case the proverb, "*Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte.*" This step once taken, Paris recovered from her panic, braced herself with the recollections of her traditional courage, and settled down in right earnest to the siege ; thenceforth her love of glory was strong enough to do the rest. She beheld

herself placed once more in the centre of the world's history ; her poets, artists, and great men vied with each other in caressing the most feminine fibres of her vanity. She coaxed and petted her sailors in the forts, her iron *Joséphines*, *Mariannes*, and *Valéries* that thundered from the bastions of Mont Valérien ; these were the bull-dogs, the creatures of brute strength, to which woman clings in the hour of weakness and of peril ; behind them, Paris rallied from her swooning panics, her cold fits of dejection, shook off her feverish caprices, and the spring of feminine obstinacy recoiled, after each relapse, with a fresh impetus of heroism. On the other hand, the effects of famine and privations were greatly diminished by the practical Socialism which prevailed in such measures as the grant of a subsidy to the working classes, and the introduction of a maximum tariff, regulating the price of bread ; and the rationing of the meat was the extension of the ordinary *régime* of the poor to the rich. *Queues*, short rations, hunger, and death are strange republicanizers of society, and never was the levelling instinct of the people so thoroughly gratified as by the siege. Ye *aristos* who have not fled across the water, enjoy with us your ounce of meat off your requisitioned carriage-horses ; take your gun, or your *concierge* will denounce you ; fall in the ranks,

and do the bidding of your captain who made the boots you walk in. And thou, Polyte of Belleville with thy twin "Guguste" of Montmartre, swagge it bravely in the streets, incarnate saviour and regenerator of mankind; march to the sound of drum and trumpet, sing thyself hoarse with *Mourir pour la Patrie*. Each day is holiday to thee; thou makest seven "Mondays"\* of the week, regaling thy comrades with too much punch when their duty calls them to the outposts, or thyself with "*glorias*"† and absinthe after the nightly labours of the club. 'Tis "Sesame" in the most sacred precincts for Polyte and Guguste—"Sesame" at Hôtel de Ville, when Polyte rapped at Jules Favre's and Trochu's door, and signified his pleasure to the Government by delegates of his own choosing. Up with ye, idlers and "*feignants*," traitors and Badinguets of the Louvre, bestir yourselves, and take heed ye don't betray us. Ah! 'tis a brave and mighty thing to feel oneself the centre of the universe!

True, there were enough *aristos* and traitors left to feel the want of theatres and *cafés*. One by one, the theatres re-opened under the usual pretext of

\* "*Faire lundi*," a phrase of the Faubourgs for prolonging the festivities of Sunday.

† "*Gloria*," a beverage composed of coffee, brandy, and sugar.

charity, and the coffee-houses, closed by M. de Kératry at half-past ten, are now tolerated till midnight. The political club is occasionally a source of amusement, and at all times a convenient place to spend the long cheerless evenings for those who have no fireside of their own, and cannot afford the luxury of a *café*. In time of peace, the Sorbonne lecture-room and the public libraries were the winter-providence of Bohemia, which at present crowds in *casinos*, *Valentinos*, and *Folies-Bergères*. *A propos* of clubs, I have just returned from a meeting held at the *Salle de la Redoute*, in Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This club is led by ardent Revolutionists, and the Government is soundly rated there every night. Citizen Gaillard, the valiant shoemaker who provoked Paul de Cassagnac to mortal combat, opened the ball with violent invective. Folding his arms deliberately on his chest, "*Citoyens*," he began, "the Government is betraying us. How often have we been told to wait patiently till the Prussian lines were forced! We have waited; and what is our reward? Why; that the country has been laid waste for forty leagues around our city, and that the promised *trouée* is become impracticable, because, even should our army succeed in the attempt to force its way through the enemy's lines, it must inevitably be starved in the Prussian desert

that surrounds our walls. Citizens, do you at last perceive that the Government is simply leading you, step by step, to surrender and infamy ? . . .” He continued for at least a quarter of an hour in this strain, and wound up with a peroration which brought down the house, then suddenly disappeared from the tribune, and resumed his place amongst his compeers on the platform. With slow and timid step came shuffling forward a mild spectacled person, whose gait and gesture betokened at the first glance an apologist of the Hôtel de Ville ; this was Citizen Casimir Henricy, a wolf amongst the lambs of his *Folies Bergères*, where he usually presided, a lamb amongst the wolves of the *Salle de la Redoute* :—an abbreviation of human misery, a butt for the malevolence of his fellow-creatures ; to crown all, he was afflicted with hoarseness, and his voice cracked in its shrill *soprano* effort to dominate the tumult of the assembly. His speech was a defence of Trochu, so able that it covered the unfortunate Governor with ridicule. Heaven save him from his friends ! The mere mention of his name raised cheers of ineffable irony, and murmurs of indignation amongst the women, who, true to the instincts of their sex, evince a more unrelenting spirit than the men. Some really clever speeches were made, urging on the people a policy of desperate resistance, and were

enthusiastically applauded by the audience, whose passions seemed to be idealised and softened by the charm of oratory. At last appeared an inventor with a bomb of his own invention. The inventor, was a little man with sparkling ferret eyes and a long grey sorcerer's beard; the bomb was an eighteen-inch cylinder, divided into several compartments, with a close resemblance to an overgrown Bologna sausage or a piece of the trans-Atlantic cable. Its parent handled it fondly, and turned it round and round on the table to make a full exhibition of its beauties; whereat an involuntary shudder ran through the crowd, and the Nationals crouched low on their benches—"What if it were to go off?" The inventor proceeds to explain that his bomb explodes like a cracker on touching the soil, and whizzes about right and left, at two feet above the ground, in a wonderful zigzag fashion, with a peculiar gift for finding out the places where the Prussians may lie concealed and "mowing them down" like hay. Here was then an engine which could procure deliverance at the speediest and cheapest rate; yet how had the inventor and the invention been received by Messieurs of the Hôtel de Ville? "They told me, 'Go and make your experiments at Vincennes.' I go to Vincennes, and find the ground always occupied by somebody or something;—'tis

‘Come another day’—an excuse with which patriots are put off. I therefore propose to the Republican League to raise a subscription of a thousand francs for my experiments ;—I must have a thousand francs at least. And the experiments over, we shall carry our bomb to the Government, and put the question to them, ‘Do you wish to mow the Prussians down ? answer, Yes or No.’ And if they don’t, why we shall mow *them* . . . . ha, ha, ha !” and he laughed at his own wit. The President adopted the “baby” in the name of the League, which consented to be its nurse, and required the parent to name it. “Well,” said the inventor, scratching his head, “you may call it the—Mower ; oui, le *Faucheur* !”

A great sensation was produced by a citizen, who unravelled there and then before us the mysteries of a deep-laid plot, machinated by the Jesuits who have taken Trochu and all the generals into their pay. Everything that is done here and in the country is concerted with a view to surrender : the Republic will be quashed between the Prussians and the Reaction ; and the Jesuits will restore a monarchy. “No doubt we shall succeed in defending Paris,—we are determined ; but then you don’t know the Jesuits,—they will turn our success to their own advantage. If we hold out here till we are saved by the provinces, you can understand that the



Rurals will make their own terms, and Kératry will bring a king in his wake. Therefore, I say, Paris must owe her deliverance to her own unaided self."

The meeting soon broke up, and we all went home with the usual serenity and good humour of a French assembly that has been tickled with fine speeches. Workmen crowded round my friend Andrieu to congratulate him on his speech, which had been the success of the evening. One of them confided to me that the speaking was much better at the *Salle de la Redoute* than at any other club. "I have been in many a *réunion publique*, and have nowhere found speakers who knew their public better. I should like to know, *tout de même*, what the Government thinks of all this: they must have their ears well stuffed with cotton not to hear it; *il faut qu'il ait un fameux coton dans les oreilles pour ne pas l'entendre*."

I stopped on my way home at the Café de Madrid, where I found a number of my friends engrossed in the discussion of Ledru Rollin's republican manifesto. They were equipped in the uniform of the war battalions, with red scarfs girded round their loins, and were under orders to start next day in the direction of Bourget, where the battle is to come off. But it is clear that the siege is a mere accident in their existence; indeed, the war itself is an episode

in the history of Besieged Paris. Surrounded as they are by the cannon of the Prussians, their pre-occupation is to revise the catechism of republican policy. The real drama is being played inside to the accompaniment of the thunder of the forts. In the midst of our discussion, a reporter steps in with the latest *on-dit* from the boulevard :—"15,000 Prussians have been taken. The news is not yet officially confirmed, *mais ça se dit sur le boulevard.*" This is our usual cordial before going to bed—the sleeping-draught which composes us to rest, "the cotton with which we stuff our ears" against unpleasant noises—the night-cap of our illusions. Good-night, Paris, and may the hosts of Sennacherib vanish like a morning dream.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CHRISTMAS.

*Tuesday Night, 20th December.*—Dinner this evening, for the first time since the siege, at a restaurant. I went with my friend, the lawyer, M. L., to the “Café Gaillon,” in the neighbourhood of the Rue de la Paix. Nobody makes a mystery now-a-days of what he eats; so I shall say that we dined off a basin of soup, a slice of roast beef with fried potatoes, a *friture* of gudgeon—four gudgeons for each of us—plus a dish of French beans; preserved apricots for dessert, and coffee. The beef was so excellent of its kind, that I felt convinced it must be mule; but Germain swore “by the ashes of all he held dearest, that it was beef;” and my friend assured me that there were means, more or less legitimate, of procuring this unknown viand, and that he himself possessed a week’s supply of it in his cellar. I was particularly struck with the Englified appearance of the place: each table had its own occupant, who kept himself apart from the rest, and British silence prevailed

throughout the *établissement*. Would you form a notion of the real aspect of Paris during the siege?—it looks almost as dull as London.

A gentleman of the old school came and sat down at the table next us, in spite of my friend's charitable intimation that there was a draught which might give him a cold. "He's a bore," whispered M. L . . . . ; and we were soon treated by him to a long tirade on Prussian robbery and exactions—a tirade evidently plagiarised from Count Chaudordy's diplomatic circular. He spoke, too, of a *plebiscite* in contemplation by the Government, on the question of continuing the defence. I should not mention this rumour if it did not coincide with assertions made the other night in the clubs, about certain voting-papers already prepared at the National Press. Already certain voices are heard, like in the first fortnight of November, discreetly urging the wisdom of capitulation. M. L . . . . , for instance, believes that if the Prussians once obtained the military satisfaction of an entry into Paris, they would become more reasonable in their demands. But such expressions as these only fall from the lips of the rich, whom peace would restore to that Sybarite pillow on which this generation had fondly hoped to dream away the brief hours of existence; while to the poor it must be fraught with ruin and distress, or, at least, it will be a return to the slavery of

mechanical labour from which they have been emancipated by the siege. No wonder, then, that having had a taste of Utopia and of heroic ideals, they are loth to replace themselves under that routine of drudgery which is, no doubt, their portion in every sound system of Political Economy. We spoke of the truly admirable docility with which they submit to their hardships. "I fear this will end in a great outburst," observed my friend. "The Parisians are so sudden in all their acts; and the more they have restrained themselves up till now, the more fierce, when the moment comes, will be the outbreak of their fury." I see that we are greatly pitied in England for eating *salmis* of rats; but this is a mere caricature of our real miseries. Cast a scrutinising glance amongst families whose modest habits revealed the dignity of poverty, and examine the death-lists—for only the death-lists know their secrets: hundreds die of "pneumonia"—so the doctors call it—who were ashamed to stand in a *queue* at a municipal *cantine*. Only to-day, M. L . . . saw in a courtyard two ladies, thickly veiled, who sang from door to door for halfpence. The world will ignore all this quiet dying and suffering, and will stare at some fashionable *menu* of a rat-dinner which a Special Correspondent enjoyed in the company of some half-dozen celebrities. It is a gay time for some :

champagne has not turned sour from the continual cannonade; and *cocottes* have not lost their taste for suppers and *cancan*, kept up till the early hours of dawn, when Sardanapalus gallops off to the outposts and is brought back in the evening with his thigh smashed by a shell. Our gay ladies are not exclusive in their favours. Count de Solms, first secretary to the Prussian Embassy, has paid a visit to Paris, in disguise, of course, and has kept up a correspondence across the lines with Mlle. F . . . , of the Opera. Too many women have been left in Paris as well in some *hôtels* of the Faubourg St. Germain as in some *boudoirs* of the Quartier Bréda, for General Trochu and his staff to keep their secrets long. To-morrow's *sortie* is directed against Bourget: a staff-officer confided it to his wife; and what a wife knows, the world is not long in discovering.

As I came along the boulevards towards midnight, I found traces of great libations, in which the war-battalions had been indulging to prepare themselves for the fight. An Oxonian, passing by the Café Riche, might have thought himself back in High Street on the night of a "bump-supper," or perhaps in the Haymarket after the University Race. Meantime, a long file of ambulances with the sinister redcross was creeping up the Rue du Faubourg

Montmartre; but this side of the picture is concealed, as much as possible, from the troops.

*Wednesday Morning, 21st December.*—The brisk cannonade which I hear in the direction of Mont Valérien informs me that we are treated to another *sortie*—the *sortie* officially announced by the closing of the gates on Monday, and the object of which, according to Madame X., is to take possession of the village of Bourget. Judging from the direction of the sound, the battle must be engaged on a vast perimeter from Mont Valérien in the west to Nogent in the east. But, if the Prussian generals have good spies, they can hardly be mistaken as to the real point of attack. Are these *sorties* simply intended to amuse the Parisians, and while away the time, until Diplomacy can intervene, like the seconds in a duel, with the cant phrase, “Now, gentlemen, put up your swords; you have done enough for honour”? For my own part, I cannot help thinking that our capitulation will be a parallel to Donna Julia’s, who,

“Saying she would ne’er consent, consented.”

*Thursday Evening, 22nd December.*—Cold intense. I prefer to lie in bed, fuel being so scarce, and to forget the siege over M. Thiers’s “History of the Revolution.” I see that General Schmitz apologises for the failure of yesterday’s *sortie*, and Jules Favre puts in

a word of praise about our cannons. *Our* cannons, indeed, for we have bought them with our half-pence; and they do look so elegant, so bright, I think we shall hardly consent to part with them! There seems, by all accounts, to have been a great commotion in the town, caused by the bad news from Bourget, and the general impression that things are going wrong at head-quarters. Trochu is in a state of collapse since Orleans and Champigny. Ducrot, ever since his fatal promise of the 28th November, seems to those who approach him "as one under sentence of death," haunted by a fixed idea which paralyses his faculties; he feels that he has lost his moral ascendancy, conquered at such a price, and has been told to his face by a general of division that "his pen was longer than his sword." The discipline of the army reflects the dissensions of its chiefs. Yesterday, the Mobiles of the Côte d'Or refused to advance, asking if it was for the Republic or the Commune they were made to fight?—and this military *strike* required the most delicate management on the part of the officers, who had to give their word that the regiment would not be engaged in the first line, but kept in the rear as a reserve. The cry of "Vive la Commune!" has again been raised in certain parts of the town, and, if I am correctly informed, in front of the Théâtre Français by the Palais Royal.



*Friday Evening, 23rd.*—To-day, ashamed of my indolence, I took my “courage with both hands,” as we say here, and climbed the heights of Montmartre, whose frozen gutters form diminutive glaciers on the steep slopes of the narrow winding Rue Lepic. From the summit of the hill above the Place St. Pierre, I enjoyed a magnificent view of the country north-east of Paris. On my left was St. Denis, with its forts emerging from the inundation of La Crould ; in front, the ill-fated Bourget—a long white wall, with a background of trees, and behind them a few zigzag lines which might be the gables of the houses. Further still, and on the left, the village of Dugny, a patch of black with a few white spots. Beyond these nothing but a flat naked plain, whose vast angle seemed to my unmilitary eye to open wide the gates of deliverance between the heights of St. Denis, on our extreme left, and those of Bondy, on our right. Aye, but there was Bourget, that obstinate Bourget, in the gap. Was it for this reason that Fort de l’Est, earthworks in front of Aubervilliers and Drancy, and armour-plated vans rushing up and down the Soissons Railway, were pouring volleys of shot and shell into the devoted village, which remained mute and impassible, as if indifferent to its fate ? The crowd watched eagerly for each cannon-flash, and theorised about trench, sap, and assault. “At

last," said a critic, rubbing his hands, "our generals have understood their work ; they are going to carry the Prussian positions, one after the other, by a regular siege, as they ought to have done long ago : however, all's well that ends well ; *ils ont fini par où ils devaient commencer*, and we've enough bread and powder to give them time for their work." Eye-glasses were freely passed from hand to hand, with which we spied the movements of dark mysterious masses in the rear of Bourget. The conversation flowed free and unrestrained :—no ceremony amongst strangers, no need of introduction in a Parisian group, especially at such a time as this, when each man recognises a friend in his neighbour ; for a kind of quarantine intimacy has grown up between us, knit together as we are by confinement and misfortune. What a relief from the dulness of a siege to be shut up, at least, in such humanized company ! So these "Athenians" whiled away the afternoon on the bleak hill of Montmartre in pleasant sociable converse, which reduces for an interval the horrors and miseries of this anxious existence to human and civilised proportions—chasing their butterfly hopes, and weaving the charmed tissue of illusion.

All was bustle on the Place St. Pierre below. The "citizen-soldiers" had disgraced themselves at Avron, and the runaways met with such a warm reception

from their viragos of Montmartre, that they almost wished themselves back under the fire of the Saxon batteries.

*Saturday, 24th.*—Treachery at Mont Valérien. It would seem that a French doctor has been detected at that fortress in a regular correspondence with the enemy; so, at least, I hear on good authority. Nor is this the only case of treason which I have heard positively asserted. A friend in the fifth battalion of Parisian Mobiles, quartered at Issy, informs me that, during the first days of the siege, guns were found spiked overnight on the bastions of the fort: the matter was carefully hushed up, for fear of alarming the public mind at such a critical period, but a watch was set on the movements of the *Israelite* members of the battalion and the masons employed at the bastions.

*Sunday, 25th.*—A “merry Christmas,” which we agree to call a “happy” one: happiness is a term that contains a fund of quiet, resigned contentment. Lay in stores of resignation; for there is little else to feed or cheer one, with the thermometer at 10 degrees Centigrade below freezing-point, and whirlwinds of gritty dust that choke you in the streets. General Schmitz says very little, in his reports, of the war, but keeps us well informed as to the state of the weather, which has put a stop to all work in

the trenches. As for the Prussians, I suspect they are simply keeping sentry, leaving Field-Marshal Frost to do their work.

The modest little English church in the Avenue Maëbœuf was hung with Christmas holly, as on former years, and a larger congregation than usual, some eighty persons, assembled there this morning. The English colony *speaks* of roast beef and plum pudding, sniffs from afar the good cheer of Albion, grumbles at Bismarck, turns up its nose at elephants and moralizes more wisely about the siege than the leader in the *Times*. The German view of it is represented in all its grimness by an article quoted at length from the *Silesian Gazette*, in to-day's *Official Journal*. The *Gazette* speaks of the "PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT," in which the long deferred bombardment will work its dire effects. We had forgotten all about professors and Psychology but I foresee the word will soon be in fashion on the *boulevards*. "Everything is ready for the bombardment," writes a Correspondent from Versailles to the *Daily Telegraph*, "and I have full reason to believe that it will begin on the 19th." These repeated warnings, I confess, leave me somewhat incredulous. The Prussians have persistently preserved a policy of inaction towards us, which must ultimately starve us into surrender. Why, then, depart from it when

famine is so close at hand ; why force the half-opened door? Besides, the bombardment could only be partial so long as they are not in possession of at least two or three forts ; and three months of siege, though they have relaxed the spring of active energy, have seasoned the Parisians for passive endurance, and blunted the vital instinct which struggles against death.

*Monday, 26th.*—The truth must out at last, and we learn this morning that the army has retreated from its advanced positions, of which so much was made some two or three days ago. No less than 5000 cases of frost-bite—so it is privately reported at the Central Hospital Administration—have occurred amongst the troops. The army is utterly demoralized, and has lost all confidence in Trochu ; the generals have lost all confidence in themselves. M. de Maud'huy, who commands Vinoy's best division, is said to have stated the case thus before his men :—  
“We are twenty-five feet deep in the—mud, and we shall never get out of it—*Nous sommes à vingt-cinq pieds dans la m . . . , et nous n'en sortirons jamais.*” An official said this afternoon in my presence, at the Hôtel de Ville, that “our supply of flour is greater than is generally credited. Jules Ferry's secretary, who hands in to him a daily report of the exact amount of provisions in store,

with a duplicate for General Trochu, assured me to-day that the quantity of requisitioned wheat and flour\* has surpassed all expectation, and that we are provisioned till the end of next month."

*Wednesday, 28th.* — About eight o'clock yesterday morning we were startled by an unusual rap—rap—rap—of artillery in the far east, which made us think at first that a sortie was going on at Avron. No; this was the bombardment, the first attack of the German artillery against the defences of Paris. Those formidable siege batteries which had been so much talked of that at last we refused to believe in them, now spoke in no ambiguous tones. Jules Favre makes response with a proclamation, warns the people of Paris that the attack on Avron is but a prelude to a general bombardment. His words look ominous on the walls:—"It is the Krupp gun; *they* have cannons that carry two leagues and a half—and what is the Government about?" Such was the talk in a group of gossipers that huddled round a placard in the Rue Bellechasse, one of the many streets in our quiet neighbourhood exposed to the Krupp of Châtillon. "What is the Government about?" "The Government!"—said a gentleman dressed in a suit of solemn official black; "don't you

\* A requisition took place at this time of stores of grain that had not been previously declared.

see that the Government *is taking measures pour contre-battre l'artillerie prussienne*: the Government has no need to tell you *what* measures it is taking." . . . . This and much more ; but my father, recognizing in the speaker an old acquaintance—an exile met in Italy—taps him on the shoulder ; and the flow of eloquence ceases. " Mon cher ami," he whispers, " we're in a confounded mess ; but it's no use telling these people." He told us that he was connected with the Provision Department, and offered his assistance in his official capacity. " We must keep heart," said he ; " by the 15th of next month we shall have a million of men under arms, and it is not long to wait."

My mother and I went on " our siege-walk " towards the Faubourg St. Antoine, as far as the Place du Trône, and then turned to the left up the Boulevard de Charonne. Scarcely a vestige remained of the young saplings that peopled this outer line of boulevards, except here and there a stump with the bars of the iron fence that protected the tree lying wrenched and twisted on the soil. Further on, huge trunks lay prostrate, around which swarmed an eager crowd of women and children, hacking with their puny hatchets at the twigs and bark. A few tall elms, which still defied the efforts of the people, were being sawn at their base, while all the

time clusters of gamins were preying on the branches : —one moment more, and the tree might totter on its trunk, and hurl its Gavroches on to their mother earth. All Belleville had turned out into the streets, and swarmed in ant-like procession, *divina vis populi*, each one bearing away his portion of the spoil, branch, log, faggot, sweepings of small twigs shovelled into aprons and pinafores—a desperate struggle for existence. Hard by was the cemetery of Père la Chaise, with its ample garden of tombs spread on the steep flanks of mountainous Charonne. As we went slowly up the steps which lead to the mortuary chapel on the summit, the muffled sound of distant guns fell like a dirge on our ears—so low, so mournful, so deadened by the snow that lay thick on the intervening ridge of Montreuil, that it seemed to come from another world. We paused awhile to look into a long wide trench which the diggers were carrying through the eastern slope of the hill, while at the other end, three by three, the coffins were being piled, and a thin layer of earth gradually veiled them from our sight. Sorrowing relatives gazed tearfully at the closely packed *fosse commune*, crushing its dead in such tight embrace. “Never mind,” quoth a grave-digger, who recked not of the agonies of the tomb, “there’s room enough for all of ’em—*il y a de la place pour tout le monde ; allez.*”



A few yards further on we joined a crowd of telescope-gazers, who were straining their eyes to no purpose at the dark mass of heights which concealed the Saxon batteries. A soldier of the 35th regiment was telling of the fight at Champigny, where the mitrailleuses had done such brave work; and he declared that Paris was impregnable. "If we only had provisions, we could hold out ten months longer." His comrade was less confident, and spoke with awe of the Prussian Krupp. Middle-aged *bourgeois* were deploring the scenes of pillage we had just witnessed. "It's a hard thing indeed to die for want of fire," reasoned a warmly clad and comfortable-looking *épiciér*; but pillage is a serious matter, and once begun, you don't know where it may not end. Hum! — Republic is all very good; but if their idea of it is pillage, that won't do for *me*."

On our way home by the prison of La Roquette, we came to a timber-yard which the people had cleared out that morning. They were now disputing the last few planks of a cart-shed. We asked a National Guardsman and a woman standing by us in the crowd how the day had passed in their arrondissement, and were told that the timber-yard had been emptied, a few hours ago: "The owner was a grasping speculator, an *accapareur*, who hoarded up his wood to make a market of the misery of the people;

so the people helped themselves to his wood." Just then appeared a detachment of National Guards, preceded by a tri-coloured gentleman. "That's Monsieur Mottu, our Mayor;" and the woman looked on complacently, while Monsieur le Maire advanced to the shed, shaking hands right and left with the people, and appearing to recommend that things should be done decently and in order, presiding, as it were, over an equitable distribution of the plunder.

*Thursday, 29th.*—The National Guard is at all times fond of musical display, but I never heard its music louder than to-day, as I passed up the Rue de Rivoli. Surely there is something in the wind, thought I, and on Place de l'Hôtel de Ville the matter was explained: a war battalion had just returned from the outposts with the news that Avron was evacuated. Great was the concern of the people: the Nationals themselves, the bearers of the news, made light of it, to our great astonishment. "We have left Avron," they said, "but what of it? we did very well to leave it." "Leave it to the Prussians?" indignantly cries a grey-beard. "Ah! bah! you're an alarmist. The Prussians cannot occupy Avron, commanded as it is by the guns of Rosny; it is simply neutral ground, and I give you my word Avron is a position of no importance." "Mon cher

Monsieur," observes a cynic, who shall be nameless, "is not that the case with all' positions ?—they are important while they are held, and cease to be so when they are lost." The Nationals were soon marched off with great bustle, loud flourish of trumpet, and beating of drums ; the groups thickened in the square, and Babeldom prevailed. A patriot tears and stamps, shrieks that "the heavy naval guns are still at Avron," shakes his fist at contradictors ; but a friend pats him on the back, and explains that, although the infantry has been removed from the plateau, the artillery has been left there to bombard the Prussians. "Ha, ha !" cries a merry little man, with a round face, "I shouldn't like to be in their shoes : Rosny is warming them well." But a prowling *faubourien* protested with dogged reiteration that Avron was *bel et bien nettoyé* (cleared out), artillery and all, except two naval guns abandoned to the Prussians. "It's a lie : look at his *red hair*—he's been in at least fifty groups : seize him, off with him to the guard-house." The red-haired gentleman slunk off, followed by a dozen respectabilities, who muttered something between their teeth about traitors and alarmists.

Coming back from the Plateau of Belleville, where I spent the evening in watching the bombardment of Fort Rosny, I fell upon a couple of gendarmes

shaped valley of the Seine. Look at Paris crouching at the feet of its faubourgs, Montrouge, Vaugirard, Clichy, Montmartre, La Villette, Chaumont, Belleville, Charonne, girt with a circle of a million *Sans Culottes*; and recall the threat—no empty threat—of a “Descent of the Faubourgs.”

There was a lull in the cannonade, and disappointed sight-seers were propounding their own views of the bombardment. Said one, “The Prussians bombard,—it is a feint to cover their retreat.” Others conjectured that the enemy was anxious to mask his movements, and detach reinforcements to the help of Frederick Charles defeated by Chanzy. The most ingenious,—therefore the most Parisian, explanation was a *feint*. All the world knows that we are born strategists. Have we not invented that pretty phrase about Chanzy playing with Mecklenbourg like a cat with a mouse?—only I am afraid that Chanzy was not the cat, and Mecklenbourg not the mouse.

A violent snowstorm forced us to “retreat in good order,” and take shelter in a poor little inn by the way-side. My mother shuddered at the sight of mine host, a sturdy weather-beaten sire, resting his gouty leg on a chair by the stove and smoking his short clay pipe in grim republican silence, while our hostess comes tripping forward with an apronful of

chips, and rakes the dying embers. The old man bids his wife produce the cordial of Raspail, saying, with grave courtesy, "Mesdames, I recommend Raspail. He is a great man, and if we had but half a dozen like him" . . . . he sighed—"a pity Raspail is so old, and his poor head quite gone, *il a le coco* \* *très usé*—ah! if he had some 'coco' left!" This was a good introduction to the subject of war and politics. He was quite easy in his mind as to the bombardment. "The cannonade," he said, "is over; the batteries have been stormed, and they are now at work with the bayonet." This he delivered with the composure of a veteran, and relapsed into silence; then stroked his leg, and broke out again—"Oui, oui, they have got it; they are *nettoyés*." . . . . We left the poor old man soothing his gout with this reflection, and I think we shall remember pleasantly the poor little inn by the *plateau* of Belleville.

An able writer in the *Temps* puts the question direct to the Government, "What is to be done with the army of 200,000 men formed in Paris during the siege? This, our last resource, if the city is compelled to surrender, must at any cost be saved from our ruin to prolong the resistance of the country in some more favourable quarter. Let the Government

\* "*Coco*;" faubourg slang for "head."

speak out boldly and declare, without hesitation, what means it possesses, and whether it can afford to wait for our deliverance by the provincial armies." The *Temps* has "belled the cat," and its article is inserted in almost every paper; so, *nolens volens*, the Government must open its mouth to-morrow.

*Saturday, 31st December.*—The Government *has* opened its mouth with a wordy and ambiguous proclamation from the pen of General Trochu. The Governor seems to ignore the validity of the objections urged against his temporizing policy; for he meets them with the classical tirade which we thought Ollivier, Palikao, and the ex-Empress had worn threadbare,—about the necessity of union and concord amongst citizens: the usual argument with which a Government *in extremis* supports its demand for *carte blanche* to commit its last blunder. Better for France, better for the Empire itself, if it had been upset on the 9th August, after Wörth, than on the 4th September after Sedan! General Trochu's resignation was expected, and, accordingly, his new literary attempt has met with a very cold reception. The spun-out metaphors about "the sentiments of reciprocal confidence" and "the sheaf," or "*faisceau*" of our "unanimity," raised a great titter on the boulevards: the "*faisceau*" is about as

unfortunate as the "plan," which afforded so much merriment in October :—

" Je sais le plan de Trochu.  
Plan, plan, plan, plan, plan !  
Mon Dieu ! quel beau plan !  
Je sais le plan de Trochu :  
Grâce à lui, rien n'est perdu.

Quand sur du beau papier blanc  
Il eut écrit son affaire,  
Il alla porter son plan  
Chez Maître Ducloux, notaire.

C'est là qu'est l' plan de Trochu.  
Plan, plan, plan, plan, plan.  
Mon Dieu ! quel beau plan !  
C'est là qu'est l' plan de Trochu !  
Grâce à lui, rien n'est perdu."  
    &c.      &c.      &c.

Trochu flatly contradicts the rumours of dissension between the members of the Government. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse* : the official denial of a fact seems the most effective method for establishing its truth.

The greybeards of the Café de Madrid are very desponding. G——, the veteran conspirator, tracked in his youth from club to club by the police of His "Majesty" Louis Philippe, squeezed my hand with more than his usual energy, while he gave vent to the pent-up sorrows of his heart. "The end is coming!" he said ; "and yet I cannot believe it. Is there no honour left in the hearts of Frenchmen ?

No, we must pitch this Government out of the window." The café was cramfull of people, and conversation clattered with the dominoes. "Who shall succeed Trochu in the Governorship?—there is Admiral Saisset, who discovered Avron; just lost by Vinoy;—there's La Roncière, the right man in the right place at St. Denis. Try the admirals, since the generals have broken down." . . . The listeners were too thoroughly outnumbered by the talkers for the conversation to be anything but desultory, and suddenly it hung fire from having blazed too rapidly at first. A little man, who had patiently waited for the company to talk itself out, stepped then from his corner, and took up a central position at our table. A wiry, clever little creature, the very soul and essence of a Parisian, with a play of impish mimicry in the twitches of his close-shaven comedian face. His person, a puckered up elastic ball of humanity, which had bounced up and down the asphalt of the Boulevard Montmartre for the last fifteen or twenty years. "What do you want," cries he, "of a Governor of Paris? A Jack-of-all-trades like Trochu—a wee-bit of a general, a slice of a Minister of War, with a spice of the Prefect of Police and a dash of the Home Secretary. . . . Tell you what: in '48, at the Club de l'Ecole de Médecine, somebody started that great joke of proposing Barbès for the Gover-



norship of Paris ; and only fancy—the whimpering *ganaches*\* were actually going to vote it, when a *gamin* bounced up on his bench and sang out, ‘Governor of Paris! We don’t want a Governor; *it’s we as governs,—c’est nous qui gouverne.*’ And his false concord did more than the wisest speech to quash Barbès and the governorship together.” A general laugh ran through the café, and dispelled the previous gloom. The speaker took advantage of the effect he had produced to sum up, for the benefit of the company, his own views of the situation. “We are better off for food than we imagined. I have just heard that our bread will last till the end of February ; but we must, by all means, get rid of Trochu’s staff, and purge the Government of those two meddling foreigners, Bibesco† and Cernuschi, who have got everything under their control.” . . . He alluded to the widely-spread, and not wholly unfounded, suspicion which will attach to the staff at the Louvre, so long as it has not satisfactorily explained certain ugly coincidences connected with the *sorties*—and I would here remark, *en passant*, that the staff-officers are, for the most part, young men of fortune whose promotion mainly depends on the number of Jesuits and Jesuitesses of the Faubourg

\* “Ganache :” a solemn Pecksniff.

† A Moldavian Prince on Trochu’s staff.

St. Germain whom they can enlist in their interests—that this class of society longs, in secret, for the end of the war, is in a state of more or less open revolt with the capital, and would be a consenting witness to a capitulation that would humiliate the Republic. Here a diversion was created by the return of our friends in the war-battalions, who had been absent on outpost duty for the last ten days. They were at once surrounded, and received a regular ovation. The honours of last week's campaign are awarded to the National Guard; not undeservedly, I believe though the conduct of certain battalions was "not all that could be desired." Still, the civic force seems to have acquired more steadiness, its brag has been sobered, and its self-reliance strengthened. Physical fatigue and discipline combined have given a healthy tone to their minds and muscles; they have been "rusticated" to the outposts, and the country air has done much to calm that highly-wrought nervous excitement which makes them so dangerous to Governments. They were all merrily recounting their campaigning experiences—how they feasted on cabbage—which made our mouths water—spent nights in the open fields "under the beautiful stars,"—*à la belle étoile*,—fired at posts which they had mistaken for Prussians, and ran in Indian files for exercise to keep themselves warm. All this

interspersed with *badinage* and chaff. There was Peyrouton, for instance, one of the chiefs of the revolutionary party, a tall, thin, nervous, pigeon-breasted young man, whose appearance in the trenches was thus caricatured by one of his comrades:—"Peyrouton, crouching with his finger on the trigger of his rifle, looked like a chassepot at the end of a sardine, or a sardine at the end of a chassepot." Commandant Cournet, who sat opposite, was called upon, amidst much laughter, to corroborate the fact.

The picturesque medley of uniforms, with the play of light Parisian banter, was at times suggestive of a scene at a fancy-ball, or of some heroic military drama in process of rehearsal for the stage boards of the Châtelet. After all, what is the siege itself but a solemn military pageant of which Parisians are the victims and the dupes? As for poor G——, he remained inconsolable in his corner, deploring "the fatal mistake committed by Flourens on the 31st October, when he urged the members of the Government to resign, instead of sending them off at once to the prison of Mazas. Flourens spoilt everything on that occasion by his mania for parading." "And your friend Blanqui," I asked, "what did he do?" "Dear old Blanqui! He simply walked into the next room, took a seat and was hard at work, while the others were speechifying."

Near the Madeleine I learn that Chanzy and Faidhe have been victorious ; so says at least Jules Favre though he does not vouch "officially" for the fact but he repeats it to the Council of Mayors, whose position is becoming dangerous for his Government.

*New Year's Day.*—A day of *bonbons*, rocking-horse pop-guns, sausages, rat-patties, outlandish gifts of descriptions with which we endeavoured to keep the illusion of the *Jour de l'An*. The Government contributes its share to the general fund of gaiety — three ounces and a half of preserved meat, handful of coffee-grains unparched, a few dried kidney-beans, a pound of broken rice, with a cake of chocolate. Enjoy your *Jour de l'An*, Parisians, and fatten yourselves up for the Krupp of Chatillon.

## CHAPTER X.

## BOMBARDMENT.

*Thursday, 5th January, 1871.*—The last few nights have been disturbed by cannonading in the direction of the south, and ominous explosions on the slope of Chatillon. This morning at sunrise, the great concert has begun, and the din and roar of cannon is simply deafening. I went out in the afternoon to see what I could. On most countenances I noticed a vague expression of anxiety—less clatter of conversation than usual amongst the groups. At Rue de Vanves, near Vaugirard, a few symptoms of panic were perceptible. I met a knot of Guardsmen hurrying down the street, who shouted to me that “the bombardment had begun.” I was rather surprised, and asked them if it was not the cannon of the forts we heard. “You’ll soon find out your mistake,” cries one, “if you go any further. ’Tis the famous Krupp gun at work, and I have just seen an old woman’s head blown off by a shell at the Vanves

Gate." I walked up the street as far as the rampart, and found a crowd of some two or three thousand persons on the embankment of the Versailles Railway. They had come out to *see*, and saw nothing; but ran to and fro, climbed over walls and garden-fences, scrambled up the slope of the embankment, laughed, quarrelled and enjoyed themselves, tumbled in their efforts to out-climb each other, abused the sentries who warned them off the bastions: in fact, behaved like a crowd of holiday-makers at the Crystal Palace. I soon got tired of remaining with them, and asked for a ticket at the Vanves Station for Auteuil; but was told that the trains were stopped on that part of the line, "because the Prussians fired on them." I made my way on foot through the district of Vaugirard, keeping close under the embankment of the *Chemin-de-Fer de Ceinture*, or Paris "Metropolitan," for the sake of shelter. At last I reached the Auteuil Viaduct, but—so dense was the crowd—I could hardly get a glimpse of the Prussian batteries on the terrace of Meudon. The wind had shifted to the south-west, and rolled down upon us from the hills clouds of fog and cannon-smoke, through which flashed at every second the lurid light of the Krupps. The rampart, some fifty paces in front of us, was completely deserted. Its heavy naval guns were ready primed, pointing in the direction of Meudon,

and every now and then a gunner would run along the bastions to discharge his piece. This did not seem, however, to draw the fire of the Prussian batteries, which, as far as I could make out, were concentrating their efforts on the fort of Issy, though at times they sent a few shells on the Point du Jour, one of which carried away the front of a wine-shop on the Route de Versailles, and smashed the thigh of a workman. He was carried past on a stretcher, but our sight-seers were not to be intimidated ; and they crowded round each gap in the viaduct with unabated curiosity. A violent hailstorm compelled us at last to retreat, and partially extinguished the cannonade. I turned homewards, not quite sure whether I have witnessed a bombardment, but people say "the bombardment has begun." However, I shall find out all about it in the evening papers.

*Friday Morning, 6th January.*—Yes, it is "the bombardment." An hour ago, while I was in bed, I heard a loud crash at the back of our house and the sudden rush of a crowd gathering together close under my windows. A carter was loudly cursing his horse. Said I to myself, "This must be an obus." Presently I heard a whizz, but no explosion ensued. Our English maid came rushing upstairs from the baker's, and the first words she addressed to my mother were, "Please, ma'am, I've seen the first

BOMB that's fallen into Paris," evidently very proud of having been an eyewitness of this historical fact. The shell has buried itself in the earth by the new church of St. François Xavier, at a hundred yards from our house ; and judging from the direction of the hole, it must have been aimed at the Invalides, though it has fallen some three hundred yards short of the mark. It has not been followed up since by any others, and it seems as if the Prussians were only trying the range. A splendid target is the gilt dome of the Invalides, and we are prepared to be well peppered in our avenue. Our house is the corner one between the Avenue de Villars and the Rue d'Estrées, protected on the right by the houses of the Avenue de Breteuil, but exposed in the centre where St. François Xavier affords insufficient shelter.

*Friday Evening.*—We have had a splendid day of thaw and sunshine, most tempting for a "siege walk," and I took my mother and sister "to see the bombardment." First we paid our respects to this morning's visitor by the church. We found the hole, a yard long and a yard deep ; but the iron splinters had been plundered by the *gamins*, who were offering them for five sous a piece. We crossed the Champ de Mars, witnessed from the Trocadero heights the artillery duel between forts Vanves and



Issy and cloud-capt Chatillon with its wreaths and garlands of white smoke ; then continued our promenade through Passy to the Porte de la Muette. The walk behind the ramparts from this gate to the railway viaduct of Auteuil is one of the pleasantest and sunniest which the west end of Paris can afford : villas, Pompadour châteaux, "Bagatelles," parks, gardens form one continuous mass of verdure, relieved by delicate white architectural lines—you recognize the Paris of Rossini. Suddenly the ground slopes downwards by the station of Auteuil, and the sweep of hills from Meudon to St. Cloud appears as in a picture. On this valley poured the shells of the Prussian batteries, established half way up the hill from Prince Napoleon's château of Meudon to the Park of St. Cloud. At first we heard a distant sound like the hissing of a rocket, which grew louder as we neared the Seine. We kept close under the embankment, secure from the projectiles that whizzed unceasingly over our heads at the rate of perhaps a dozen a minute. The bridge itself across the Seine was deserted, for the shells came whistling through the arches and battering large holes in the brick masonry which protected the empty spaces. We dodged them through the streets of Auteuil, seeking the shelter of the houses, until we reached the river, midway between the Viaduct and the bridge of

Grenelle. A crowd had gathered on the banks to watch the effects of the shells on the Viaduct; every now and then one of the missiles skimmed as it were the parapet, and came plunging with a hiss, as of red-hot iron, amongst the floating blocks of ice beneath our feet. A flotilla of gun-boats, partly sheltered from the enemy's fire by the piles of the bridge, was steaming up the river to a safer place of retreat. I am very sorry I have no horrors to relate. All we saw and heard was a whizz, a cloud of smoke, or a splutter of stones and earth as an occasional bomb struck the parapet of the bridge. To the mere looker-on, there was nothing to convey the sense of personal danger. The Pont de Grenelle was lined with sight-seers, each of them anxious for his "five sous peep" at the Prussians. We remained there till sunset, enjoying the sight and the observations of the people. I should hardly think, from what I heard, that the "Psychological Moment" had arrived. The sun was setting behind the ridge of Sèvres, fringing the crests with fiery orange, while on the dark violet foreground of woody slope floated the white flecks of cannon-smoke amid the deadened roar of thunder—a fine ideal picture set to music, a harmony of dying colours that blended delicately with the image of death. The thoughtless crowd sauntered in Sunday-fashion along the quays, perhaps

unconsciously attracted by the charm of the weather and the beauty of the sight.

*Saturday 7th.*—A few shells disturbed my rest last night, for I am not yet quite familiarised with the sound. Rain has set in, and the streets look dreary and deserted: on the boulevards are symptoms of uneasiness—few ladies are seen out of doors, conversation is quick and hurried, coffee-houses are empty. The bombardment has evidently taken Parisians by surprise, and shaken their confidence in the efficiency of their system of defence; it reverses the position of assailant and assailed, and this is a great moral blow, especially with a people of their character. *They* bombard, therefore *they* have the game in their own hands, is the conclusion which forces itself upon the Parisian mind. General Trochu has deemed it necessary to assure us that “the Governor of Paris will not capitulate,” but this only betrays the secret turn of his thoughts, which centre on capitulation. I should not be surprised if Trochu, as a Catholic, had a touch of casuistry in his composition, and his words, read with the proper emphasis, would signify, “The Government, not the Governor, will capitulate.” Paris murmurs, half-satisfied with this Sibylline declaration, yet turns a deaf ear to the warnings of a group of energetic men, whose red placard appeared last Thursday on

the walls, summoning the citizens to appoint a Commune. Such is the state of utter prostration into which the people have fallen, partly by physical suffering and exhaustion, partly by the enervating system of falsehood under which the men of the 4th September have sheltered their own incapacity—the people are incapable of any resolution, which might either save them at the eleventh hour, or—if, as I believe, they are already past all hope of salvation—might rouse their energies for some nobler end than a capitulation patiently waited for by the Government, and connived at by the army.

*Sunday, 8th.*—The bombardment raged with increased violence during the night in our immediate neighbourhood. At half-past three this morning, a shell struck our house, and the explosion, not unnaturally, disturbed the rest of all the inmates. My father rushed into my room, and found me half-awake, unconscious of what had really happened. All I could remember was a great, mournful, rushing sound as of a hurricane, heard distinctly in my sleep,—but no explosion. I dressed, packed up some valuables in a carpet-bag, secured my poor terrified cat, and joined the rest of the family in the drawing-room, where I found a cloud of gunpowder smoke. A heap of earth, soot and rubbish choked up the fireplace, and the carpet and furniture

were covered with dust. My mother and sister had already recovered their *sang-froid*, but Puss lost his completely upon sniffing the gunpowder, and dashed wildly about the room: for him, at least, it was clear the Psychological Moment had arrived. The English maid, at first stunned and stupefied by the explosion, was now briskly moving about with matches and faggots to light a fire in the parlour and prepare the family coffee. I accompanied my father upstairs to ascertain the extent of the damage. On reaching the fifth story, we found M. L——, the architect, with his wife and son, gazing silently at the relics of what had been their *salon*, but was now a heap of rubbish and plaster. The shell had opened a great chasm in the roof, above the mirror which surmounted the chimney-piece, and the rafters hung downwards round the hole. The floor was pierced in half-a-dozen places, and splinters of the shell were embedded in the walls. One of these, two pounds at least in weight, had crashed through the panel of the door leading to Mademoiselle's bed-room, and glancing off the wall had pitched under her bed, where the poor child lay in the last stage of typhus-fever. Her mother, after attending to the sufferer, and satisfying herself as to the safety of the rest of her family, was dolefully raking out from the heaps of rubbish her shattered

china vases, flower stands, albums, and favourite knick-knacks, wringing her hands and vowing vengeance against the *roi Guillaume*, with cries of "Ah, mon salon, mon pauvre salon, the Barbarians have destroyed thee."

We attempted to console the poor lady by reminding her of the child's miraculous escape; but it was impossible to divert her thoughts for any length of time from her subject of distress. The family made preparations to remove at once to the third story, vacated by its tenants on the first day of bombardment. We left them and gathered round our fireside, where we spent the rest of the night, sipping coffee, and listening to the shells that whistled in our neighbourhood. Puss crouched on my sister's lap, starting at each fresh explosion; at last, in a sudden fit of madness, the poor beast dashed furiously against the windows, and after scouring through the room, ran under a bed and there lay concealed till the afternoon, refusing food, and suspicious of our attentions. At daybreak, the Commissaire de Police came, attended by two officials, to inspect the premises, and a zealous "knight of the red cross" enquired at the door for the killed and wounded. The house soon filled with strangers eager for their piece of the shell, and the inmates were ruthlessly stripped of the best part of

their curiosities. M. L—— succeeded, however, in preserving the base of the projectile, which had remained entire, and measured fifteen centimetres—about six inches in diameter. The bombardment ceased towards sunrise, but is at present (3 p.m.) raging at Vaugirard and Grenelle, where I have just been watching from the roof dense columns of brown smoke lit up with a red lurid glare of flame. M. Cail's factory has been already struck by several projectiles, one of which killed or maimed fourteen horses in the stables. I hear, the Latin Quarter is much damaged; but my curiosity does not tempt me out of doors to see what I can witness from my windows.

*Monday, 9th.*—Bombardment still fiercer; but we are getting used to it. The shells begin to cover all the southern districts, from Grenelle to the Jardin des Plantes, and will soon threaten our friends, the R...s, whom my sister visits every Monday. Mlle. R... is a charming Revolutionist, in whose heart Gambetta has wrought great ravages; and she confided to my sister that we could desire no more heroic end than to be smashed to atoms in our beds before to-morrow morning by the Prussian bombs. Everybody is delighted, or affects to be so, with the news from the provinces, consisting of Havas' telegrams and extracts of Gambetta's despatches, which the Govern-

ment has placarded on the walls. My friend A . . . . understands that the drift of our rulers is simply to pacify the people and tide them over the preliminaries of capitulation. But Paris, like a patient in whom all vital power of reaction has been exhausted, pillows her head on vain hopes of deliverance, and will not listen to the voice of those who summon her to the policy of despair.

Nulla salus victis nisi desperare salutem.

*Tuesday Night, 10th.*—Contrary to our anticipations, last night passed off quietly enough; but now again Châtillon has opened upon us with a vengeance. The shells come in volleys of four, at intervals of five minutes. I heard one crash just now into the wall of a coach-shed close under my window, and puss upset my inkstand on the counterpane. I muffle up the poor beast to deaden the sound for him, and continue writing, convinced that each missile I hear whistling past is for—*my neighbour*, though at times an ugly presentiment steals over me, suggesting that I may not finish the sentence I have begun.

*Wednesday Morning, 11th.*—My father called me from my bed to his room last night, and we sat up for some two or three hours—sleep was out of the question—smoking and counting the shells; paying



occasional visits to my mother, whom my sister was bravely endeavouring to comfort. My mother had shown great coolness on Sunday morning, when the shell struck the fifth story of our house; but now it turns out that she was under the impression at the time that the shells "tumbled" perpendicularly on the roof, and she imagined that our second story was comparatively safe. A sight she saw yesterday afternoon at Rue Vanneau put an end to her illusions: this was a great gap in a one-storied house which a shell had completely traversed, killing an old woman in her bed, and this modified all her ideas about the "perpendicular" descent of the *obus*. She then remembered that our house, forming, as I have already said, the corner of the Avenue de Villars, presents on that side a bare wall to the bombarding batteries. However, she was somewhat reassured, on hearing this morning from M. L——, who now occupies the third story, that as many as four or five hundred bombs have fallen overnight in our neighbourhood, without loss of life in our avenue or any damage to our house. We should remove to safer quarters, but in doing so we should only be flying from the danger of bombardment to the greater one of starvation. Our scanty stock of provisions is so exhausted that we depend for subsistence on our rations: so many

families have already removed from the bombarded districts to the central parts of the town, and the allowance of food is so closely calculated for each *arrondissement*, that the fugitives will run the risk of losing their portions. The mayor of our district entreats all his people to "remain at their posts," and stigmatizes migration as "desertion," betraying the difficulties created by the bombardment for municipal administration. In fact, I should think, from all I have witnessed, that the *direct* effects of the bombardment are not its worst, and that if it spreads northwards and eastwards to the densely peopled suburbs of Montmartre, La Chapelle, La Villette, and Belleville, it will thoroughly disorganise all municipal government, create dearth and famine in the heart of the city, while unavailable stores of food will be destroyed or wasted in the *fau-bourgs*. On the other hand, the life in cellars and sewers, to which the population of the wretched slums of Montrouge and the Quartier Mouffetard has been reduced, aggravates a hundred-fold in their case the miseries of the siege, degrades and brutifies them, till all moral energy is crushed, and only the animal passiveness remains. This is the "Psychological Moment" in which a brave and haughty people submits to surrender, like an ox to the butcher's knife.

*Saturday 14th.*—*Cela va mal*, is the phrase which everybody repeats on our side of the Seine; the people on the other side are as careless of what happens on the *rive gauche* as if it happened at Pekin. The typical Parisian of the Boulevards struts complacently between the New Opera and the Madeleine listening to the distant sound of cannon, and evidently well satisfied with this bombardment by proxy. He has been very brave throughout the siege, has joined most vehemently in the common cry against capitulation: *que voulez-vous?* he has been shut up with the desperadoes of the *fau-bourgs*, and, finding himself amongst wolves, he has “howled,” as the French proverb has it, “with the wolves:” now, he can claim the honour of having submitted to bombardment. To hear him speak so lightly of the shells that burst some three miles off, you would fancy yourself in the presence of a hero; all the time he is rejoicing in his inner heart at this pretence of a bombardment, which, like a scratch in a duel, makes a brave man to all the world of the veriest poltroon that ever walked the Boulevard. “Honour is satisfied:” a great deal is expressed in a particular shake of the hand, a nod, a delicate innuendo, and all those forms of social reticence by which a highly refined and corrupt society relieves itself of its base and cowardly sentiments without

appearing base and cowardly to a superficial observer.

Capitulation will soon restore order, with all its shams and hollowness,—that is, a despotism which will pander to the vices of the moneyed classes, deliver them from Belleville by grape shot, and from the Prussians by self-humiliation, and restore for another period of twenty years the life of selfishness and Sybaritism, the prelude in France of a social earthquake, in which the whole nation may some day be swallowed up, and disappear, like Sodom and Gomorrha, from the face of Europe. I must say that the working classes, against whom I was prejudiced at the commencement of the siege, have gradually risen in my opinion during these last two months of suffering to which they have so cheerfully submitted. Perhaps their vices were more skin deep than those of the *bourgeoisie*, and they have been to some extent disciplined by misfortune and by the consciousness of a genuine determination to defend their city; but they are essentially unsteady, disorganized, impetuous, and they have been quacked ever since the Great Revolution of '93, till their case has become well-nigh hopeless. In them, however, I fancy I can recognize some germs of life which Fortune may develope for the salvation of France, while the rest of French society is a corpse, for

which the only remedy is lime, to arrest putrefaction.

The end is drawing near: famine is doing its work; we have *queues* at the bakers, for the bread is partially rationed, and a panic has set in. The mortality amongst children is fearful: at every step you meet an undertaker carrying a little deal coffin; adults are conveyed to the cemetery in hand-carts. Only one horse is allowed by decree of Government for the most sumptuous funerals, the sable steeds having been requisitioned for the meat-market, together with the Cuirassiers' chargers.

*Monday, 16th.*—I am tired of chronicling the casualties of the days and nights as they pass. The stage which we have now reached in the history of the siege resembles very much the closing scene in a tragedy, when a general rustle in the audience announces that the interest in the drama is exhausted, and that the actor may deliver himself of his last tirade to the bare walls. Perhaps I may be colouring the external aspect of things with my purely personal impressions, for the Parisians are not true to their character, if they do not still cling to the hope of a miraculous deliverance; but the fact is, I have seen very little of them lately, the bombardment compelling me to spend my evenings with the family at home. This ceremony begins

regularly towards seven or eight o'clock, while we are sitting round the dying embers of our fire; we retire to bed, and to rest if possible: a certain number of houses are damaged, an astonishingly small number of people killed, and the general result is a certain languor and depression in the morning—the effect of sleeplessness. Last night, a great many shells exploded in or about our avenue; two houses over the way were damaged, and 10,000 francs worth of marble ornaments destroyed in a workshop next door. But the prospect of possible starvation is fraught with such unknown terror that it renders us quite callous to the dangers of bombardment; besides, in spite of soberer reason, we are become possessed with the fatalistic conviction, at the root of all military courage, that peril of a certain kind once faced secures us from all future eventualities of the same specific character.

*Thursday, 19th.*—This morning we were thrown into consternation by the news that our miserable black bread was rationed at the rate of 300 grammes, or 10 ounces, per diem for each person. I ran off to the baker's, to find doors and shutters inexorably closed; at last I gained admittance by a side-door round the corner, and—shall I confess it?—obtained a pound of flour by bribery. "*Courage,*" said the baker's wife, with a smile of triumph, "there are

great things doing: Chanzy is at twelve leagues' distance; we have taken Meudon and Montretout at the point of the bayonet; and,—bear up a while, we shall soon be revictualled.” I strolled on through the streets, glanced at the Government's proclamations, which told the old tale of a heroic effort to be made by the army and the National Guard; and the bombardment having suddenly discontinued since nine in the morning, I inferred that the battle had begun. We went to see what we could of it from the Trocadéro. A dense fog overhung the valley between Mont Valérien on the French side and the heights of Montretout and La Jonchère on the Prussian. All we could distinguish was the incessant roll of cannonade and musketry; and towards four o'clock, the redoubled fire from the bastions of Mont Valérien gave intimation of the usual “retreat in good order,” protected by the artillery of the forts. However, Paris is prepared to believe in a success, and the spirit of the people is again revived.

Next day appeared the melancholy despatch of General Trochu, announcing a repulse, and one still more melancholy, in which he spoke of an armistice of forty-eight hours necessary for the burying of the dead and the transfer of the wounded. This last despatch, which I have good reason to believe was

never intended for publication, and was only communicated to the Mayors by the inadvertency of an official, threw Paris into a state of complete prostration. The blow was followed up by a telegram from Count Chaudordy, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who informed us of the disastrous defeats sustained by the armies of General Chanzy. What was our situation? Trochu had virtually abdicated by appointing a *pro tem.* substitute at the Louvre, and shutting himself up in the fortress of Mont Valérien; Jules Favre was engaged in breaking to the people, little by little, the news of irreparable disaster, and pulling to pieces the fabric of falsehood reared by his own hands; but the people rebelled too late against the truth, and the outbreak of the 22nd January was the last feeble death-throe of their agony. I need not recapitulate the events of that day, except to caution the reader against placing implicit confidence in the official version of what took place on that Sunday afternoon at the Hôtel de Ville. A report was spread in the army by the generals, that rioters of the National Guard had come down in arms from their faubourgs to demand capitulation! The Government easily mastered this *émeute*, and took advantage of it to divert the attention of the people from the delicate questions it was preparing to handle at Versailles. After long, tumultuous discussions with the Mayors, and councils of war which evapo-



rated in talk, M. Jules Favre set out on his visit to Count Bismarck, on Monday, the 23rd January. That same day he indited the following letter to Gambetta, a letter which, besides throwing a new light on the internal dissensions of the Government, denied in General Trochu's proclamation of the 30th December, betrays Jules Favre's secret anxiety lest the Dictator of Bordeaux should denounce the "treason" of his Parisian colleagues, as he had denounced the "felony" of Bazaine at Metz,—and the pusillanimous spirit in which M. Favre approached the supreme crisis of his country's agony:—

#### JULES FAVRE TO GAMBETTA.

"The great drama, my dear friend, is drawing to a close; and nothing can avert its fatal consummation. We have received no news since your despatch of the 16th, and we feel that all hope of succour from the Provinces is at an end. But Paris refuses to accept the cruel truth. . . . After the melancholy events of the 19th, Paris looked for a speedy retrieval of defeat, and manifested with hourly increasing irritation its anger against General Trochu. I have already told you how *on several occasions I insisted on his withdrawal from command*, and how the opposition of the majority of the Council had alone overruled my intentions. Picard was my only supporter; but, after the affair of the 19th, M. Trochu's persistent retention of command became a serious danger. I made ineffectual attempts to press vigorous measures on my friends, and bring the general to a resolution.

"The whole of Friday, the 20th, was spent in this conflicting state; next day the symptoms increased in gravity, and in the evening the Mayors, at the meeting of the Government, declared in plain language to M. Trochu, that he could no longer remain at the head of the army. I have forgotten to mention that, on the previous evening, I had called a meeting of the Mayors; they sat five hours, and the question of the

defence was submitted and discussed. M. Trochu declared that further resistance was impossible, and that he was ready to yield his post to any officer holding a contrary opinion. On Saturday we convoked the most enterprising generals ; we put to them the same questions, and received from all the same answers.

"In the evening I informed the Mayors how matters stood ; and their unanimous opinion, with two or three exceptions, was that M. Trochu should resign his command, but retain the Governorship of Paris and the Presidency of the Council. They left at half-past twelve, and our deliberation began. M. Trochu had patiently submitted to the harsh language addressed to him, and showed great calmness ; but he was equally firm in his refusal to resign, recommended the Government to appoint a substitute, refused to retain any other of his functions except that of member of the Government, and declined the Presidency. Thereupon ensued a long, confused, and stormy discussion. First, we had to consider whether a substitute should be appointed, and whom we should appoint. A month ago, I proposed General Vinoy, who, not without long hesitation, was at last accepted, and we nominated him at once without consulting him. It was three o'clock in the morning ; and just then we received the news that Mazas had been forced, and Flourens, with other political offenders, set at liberty. This was only the prelude to more serious disturbances.

"Yesterday, the agitation of Paris was immense. A factious band of men endeavoured to take advantage of it for an armed attack on the Hôtel de Ville ; and their criminal aggression was the result of a conspiracy ; for they had previously occupied the windows of the houses opposite the Hôtel de Ville, and from thence fired on the building. The fusillade lasted for about half-an-hour. The National Guard and the regular troops dispersed the rioters. . . . But the danger is considerable and imminent. . . .

"*I do not enter into particulars about our resolutions ; we have taken none.\** But something must be done.—And I insist on this point : is it necessary for me to stipulate that we shall not treat for peace ? We shall only treat for Paris : as for France, we do not claim any other right for ourselves than the right of calling a National Assembly, all other questions being reserved ? For this, an armistice would be necessary : it would also benefit you, and should be accepted. . . .

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\* Yet, that very same day, M. Jules Favre proceeded to Versailles.

"In two days' time the truth must at any cost be told to Paris, which remains in ignorance, feeding on its own illusions, and eager to continue the struggle. It will be a fearful and most perilous crisis, and I do not know how we shall get through it. . . .

"My heart is broken, my dear friend. I never could foresee that such a disaster was in store for the end of my life ; and I hardly know whether I shall live through this ordeal. If I do, I shall never be consoled. At least, my aim would be to preserve for my country institutions that would permit of its profiting by these portentous calamities and would effect its regeneration. But this, too, is a dream ; still, we may attempt to realise it. We are all of us very unhappy ; but we do not think of recriminating, and we think recrimination against ourselves equally unjust and impolitic.

"I embrace you,

"JULES FAVRE."

"PARIS, Jan. 23rd, 1871."

Three days later, Jules Favre's visit to Versailles was no secret in the capital. Full particulars of Chanzy's defeats were communicated to the public through the *Official Journal*. All was finished—and Paris heaved a deep sigh of relief. Some bubbles of the chaotic storm which lurked in her depths rose indeed to the surface : there was pent-up wrath and fury ; but possibly starvation had done its work ; for Paris lay, during the fortnight which followed the capitulation, in a state of impotent torpor ; then, partially reviving from her lethargy in the Red Elections of the 12th February, she sent, torpedo-like, a thrill of horror through the country. On that day the curtain rose on the second drama of the Trilogy of France and Paris, revealing, as in the rifts of a lightning-cloud, the unseen though

not unsuspected mystery veiled, for five long months by the Prussian circle of investment from the gaze of the outer world. While I write, the second drama has been just concluded by fire and sword: M. Thiers has realized the dream of his life—a victorious campaign which he has clothed in more eloquent language than the triumphs of Austerlitz and Jena. The National Assembly has bequeathed to France Chaos and universal ruin, with a death-struggle in the next generation that will this time convulse to its very centre the fabric of the European world; and the old siege of Paris will again go forth—*LA COMMUNE OU LA MORT.*

# APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX I.

“MON CHER AMI,\*

“ Quoique très-fatigué et envahi par le spleen, je me suis mis à l'œuvre. J'ai pensé que votre œuvre gagnerait de la valeur morale, et que votre besogne serait diminuée, si, sous forme de témoignage, vous publiez telles quelles mes élucubrations sur les sujets convenus. Ainsi, sans prendre la responsabilité de mes idées, mais en disant que, voulant être impartial, vous n'avez trouvé rien de mieux que de demander à un républicain de Paris son avis général sur le Parti, et ses opinions personnelles sur le 31 Octobre et le 22 Janvier, vous procéderiez, à mon avis, politiquement et loyalement, et même très-anglaise-ment : car les témoignages sont très-prisés de l'autre côte de la Manche. Encore trois feuillets et l'article sur l'organisation (lisez désorganisation) du parti est achevé. Les autres seront beau-

\* Before leaving Paris in the beginning of February, I asked my friend for a few notes on matters relating to the Organisation of the Republican Party, with which he was personally acquainted. Though suffering from intense depression, both moral and physical, he spared neither time nor labour, and sent me the elaborate and exhaustive account which I here insert, and which I have freely used for the composition of these pages. The reader will find here portrayed, by one who took a leading part in the Communal Revolution, the principal personages that have lately appeared on the scene of French politics. I should have translated my friend's sketch, but despaired of my powers to do justice, in a translation, to the idomatic *verve* and originality of his style.

coup plus courts, mais vous reconnaîtrez, comme des amis, d'opinions diverses à qui je les ai montrées, la largeur et l'impartialité de ces pages très-calmes et très-précises.

"Dites-moi bien franchement si cette combinaison vous convient, afin que j'aie à l'ouvrage le cœur nécessaire. . . .

"Je vous serre la main,

"JULES ANDRIEU."

"PARIS, ce 15 Mars, 1871."

### DE L'ORGANISATION DU PARTI RÉPUBLICAIN, DE SEPTEMBRE, 1870, À MARS, 1871.

Un a-priori pour commencer. Par quoi commencerait-on, en effet ?

Depuis que le parlementarisme existe, le parti opposant ne peut jamais être organisé. Car les forces vives de ce parti sont absorbées par l'opposition parlementaire. Les députés de Paris, depuis Jules Favre jusqu'à Rochefort, étaient aussi nécessaires à l'Empire que la résistance est nécessaire en mécanique à l'action. L'Empire tombant de lui-même par la force des choses, l'opinion s'est tournée vers les députés de Paris ; et ceux-ci, gâtés par les tournois du parlementarisme, impérialisés par leur mode même de combattre l'Empire jusque et y compris les faux serments, ceux-ci n'ont pas pu sauver la République et la France civilement plus que ne l'a pu faire militairement l'armée française gâtée par la conquête de l'Algérie, par l'indiscipline africaine, par la sauvagerie de la guerre des rues, et par l'indiscipline plus grande encore de la paix impériale qui est la conséquence nécessaire de la Victoire des Rues.

L'affaire de La Villette a prouvé, avant la chute de l'Empire, deux choses :

1° que le parti Républicain n'était pas organisé, puisqu'à la suite des premiers désastres, il n'a pas, en faisant tomber l'Empire, prévenu Sedan, Metz, et Paris.

2° que les députés de Paris, qui avaient rêvé un commencement d'action, ont reculé devant l'acte. Camille Pelletan m'an-

nonçait un mouvement insurrectionnel général pour l'avant-veille. Les députés de Paris ont donné un contre-ordre que le parti Blanquiste n'a pas reçu, ou mieux voulu recevoir. Gambetta, en reniant à la tribune la légitimité de cette révolte, en doublant Palikao, Gambetta reniait tout simplement une complicité et mentait, mais il n'en est pas chiche de mensonges.

Le 4 Septembre, en dehors des faits connus, il y a eu toute une collection de paroles, de silences, de compromis, d'actes, de trahisons qui, moins répandus, éclairent l'histoire de ce jour fameux et non grand, par la raison que l'histoire véritable ne se trouve jamais dans les manuels à l'usage de ce Dauphin ridicule qu'on appelle le Vulgaire, et qu'on divinise sous le nom de Peuple, quitte à le salir et à l'égorger ensuite sous le nom de Populace, quand le tour est joué.

(a) Une réunion, dont Grévy faisait partie avec les députés de Paris, fait voir clair dans la bêtise vaniteuse de ces histrions. Tous étaient d'accord que la résistance était impossible. Grévy dit que des républicains ne devaient pas endosser la responsabilité de la faillite impériale. Ces messieurs de Paris pensèrent avoir la dextérité, la souplesse nécessaires pour faire la faillite, et obtenir ce concordat qu'on appelle le pouvoir. Grévy pensa comme un sceptique, mais, conformant ses actes à sa pensée, agit bien en se tenant coi. Mais eux, les Hommes de la Gauche, qu'en penser ?

(b) Ces messieurs de la Gauche ne voulaient pas proclamer la République avec Vésinier qui occupait la tribune du Corps Législatif. La République a été proclamée sur la Place de la Concorde. Gambetta proposa d'aller à l'Hôtel de Ville, pour être plus à l'aise pour délibérer. C'est lui, lui tout seul avec ses amis, dans une pièce à part, qui a nommé Etienne Arago Maire de Paris, et Kératry Prefet de Police.

(c) Rochefort, en ce moment délivré de Ste Pélagie, entouré, comme toujours, d'amis maladroits, reçoit de ces messieurs le baiser et l'accolade *Lamourette*. Il remit à demain la chose sérieuse, l'organisation municipale appelée la Commune. *Cette Commune fut promise par tous ces messieurs.* Ce fut là le sous-entendu de la journée, le pacte tacite, par suite duquel les répub-

licains qui firent le Quatre Septembre laissèrent au pouvoir ceux qui en devaient profiter. Ce demain n'arriva pas, et ne pouvait pas arriver.

(d) Le 4 Sept., au Soir, Place de la Corderie, au siège de l'Association Internationale et des Fédérations Ouvrières, Leverdays parla d'affiches à apposer pour convoquer les électeurs à la nomination de cette Commune, de cette municipalité. On ne l'entendit pas. On remit à plus tard.

Le lendemain, il revint à la charge. Ce jour-là, par son refus d'entendre et de comprendre, l'Association Internationale perdit la République. On parla de faire un manifeste—des paroles toujours !

Tolain, qui présidait le 4 au soir, Place de la Corderie, me dit : “ *Mon cher ami, nous voici sur le chemin de la République Universelle, ou de Cayenne !* ”

(e) Trochu fit garder le Louvre et les Tuileries par la gendarmerie. On dit alors que les d'Orléans y étaient cachés. Et tout dernièrement, d'Angleterre venait l'affirmation positive que, le 4, il jouait à la fois l'Empire le matin, la République l'après-midi, avec les d'Orléans présents et consentants.

Je reprends mon *à priori* :

Voici les phases par lesquelles passe, dans les fausses révolutions de 48 ou de 70, en France ou ailleurs, le parti dit Révolutionnaire. 1°. Il n'est pas organisé, et ne l'étant pas, il ne sait pas, il ne peut pas s'imposer. Il laisse donc perdre ces premières journées si précieuses qui, perdues, s'écoulent comme des minutes, et dont les minutes, bien employées, auraient l'importance de semaines, de mois et d'années.—2°. La Réaction, toujours unie,—car elle repose sur l'intérêt brut, sur l'acquis, sur le passé, sur tout ce qu'il y a d'inertie dans l'homme, la Réaction s'agite dans l'ombre, puis au grand jour, et enfin réussit une ou plusieurs contre-journées.—3°. La défaite organise un peu le parti. On se tasse un peu les uns sur les autres ; en se voyant unis, on se croit organisés. Immense erreur !—4°. Le parti agit par des manifestes, quand la force pourrait encore tout sauver.—5°. Car c'est un drame en cinq actes—, ses illusions et sa rage grandissant ensemble, il tente une ou plusieurs



actions jusqu'à désastre complet, quand tout est perdu, quand les hommes sages sont rentrés chez eux, quand il ne reste plus, pour guider la tourbe qu'il y a toujours dans les causes saintes, aussi bien celle de Jésus que celle de St. Just, quand il ne reste plus que des Fous, des Fourbes et des Iscariotes.

L' *a priori* exposé, voyons les Faits.

Quels étaient, au 4 Sept., les élémens du Parti ?

Je les énumère d'abord. (A.) Les Avocats dits ou se disant Républicains. (B.) Le Journalisme Républicain Formaliste. (C.) Le Journalisme Républicain Radical. (D.) Les restes des Comités Electoraux, d'où la députation de Paris était sortie. (E.) Les Clubs Radicaux. (F.) L'Association Internationale. (G.) Les Clubs Départementaux.

Si nous avons oublié quelque chose, nous le verrons bien. Au reste, il y a des oublis volontaires. Ainsi, c'est à dessein que je laisse de côté les Maires de Paris ; car on ne peut en parler qu'après l'analyse des élémens du parti, dont les Maires eux-mêmes sont issus.

(A.) Aimez-vous l'avocat ? On en a mis partout. Le journal, *Le Réveil*, publia la liste des avocats, membres du gouvernement, ministres, préfets, sous-préfets, administrateurs. Jules Ferry et Gambetta avaient placé tout leur monde. On ne se figure pas, en Angleterre, ce que c'est que l'Avocat ; et on ne se fait pas peut-être une idée exacte du Libéral, du Républicain Formaliste et du Radical. L'avocat français n'est pas même jurisconsulte. Tout est spécialisé. Le jurisconsulte a un cabinet où il attend le consultant. L'avocat est un parleur. Jules Favre et Picard sont connus au Palais pour leur ignorance des lois. Le premier plaide les divorces ; le second récite et habille des affaires que d'autres que lui ont étudiées. J'ai connu et même éduqué beaucoup de jeunes avocats : ils sont aussi forts en philosophie que Jules Favre, leur grand maître, dont le discours à l'Académie est resté un modèle de ridicule et de coq-à-l'âne. Ils sont incapables d'obtenir de l'accusé qu'ils défendent, du client qu'ils protègent, un exposé net des faits ; ils ne plaident jamais au fond ; ils sont les victimes des incidens d'audience en attendant qu'ils en jouent ; ils apprennent à la

hâte, verbalement, une question quelconque, technique, embrouillée, comme celle d'une prise de brevets; mais jamais au grand jamais, ils n'en garderont une notion juste de ce brevet, de cette invention, de ce fait scientifique. Quelques-uns acquièrent une sorte de célébrité par le fait de pouvoir tout apprendre, et de savoir tout oublier.

L'avocat est et reste avocat; il ne redevient jamais homme. Il ne faut pas oublier que le Leblond, qui a été le complice du gouvernement dans la longue et illégale détention des accusés du 31 Octobre, (maintenant acquittés par un conseil de guerre) est le même Leblond que le farouche défenseur de Delescluze. Delescluze s'est fort étonné de ce changement; mais, comme tant d'autres, ce vieillard est un naif. Les devoirs professionnels, n'est-ce pas le contraire du devoir? Entre la magistrature, qui rend des arrêts et des services au pouvoir, et le Barreau, pépinière d'hommes politiques, n'existe-t-il pas le même pacte qu'entre tout gouvernement représentatif et toute opposition?

Gambetta partit en ballon avec le fidèle Spuller, exemple choisi entre mille des nullités du Barreau fatalement appelées à figurer en seconde ligne au pouvoir. Car quel avocat spécialiste, ayant une *étude*—car les cabinets des avocats sont maintenant des Études—quel avocat achalandé se serait contenté du second rôle? On a donc des proportions de ce genre,—Gambetta: Spuller :: Ferry :. Etienne Béquet. Ainsi, on a beaucoup blagué Gambetta d'avoir transporté en province, comme demi ou quart de Secrétaire d'Etat, Georges Cavalier, plus et trop connu sous le surnom de 'Pipe-en-Bois,' que lui donna Jules Vallès à la première représentation d'Henriette Maréchal. Eh bien! sur l'honneur, je l'affirme, Georges Cavalier dont personne plus que moi ne connaît les ridicules, est un génie près des myrmidons Spuller et Béquet. Mais il n'a pas l'obésité 'Plon-Plonienne' du premier, et l'irréprochable faux-col du second. L'avocat politique est plus libéral que républicain, et s'il est ou se croit républicain, fatalement il se trouve être plus formaliste que radical.

D'abord, définissons le Libéral; c'est un avorton issu du flanc bourgeois de la Révolution de 89, qui entend par liberté le

privilege de jouir du *statu quo* social, du collége, des diplomes, des immunités de sa caste, des bénéfices réels cachés sous les illusions démocratiques du régime représentatif : Gauche qui se ferme aux Coups d'Etat, mais qui, après les avoir laissé faire, se rouvre quand les Coups d'Etat promettent les libertés de Janvier 1869. C'est Emille Ollivier avant, c'est Ernest Picard après. C'est l'esprit voltairien dans tout son empatement bourgeois, c'est le perpétuement de ce cri de toutes les causes qui vont mourir : *Après moi, la fin du monde.*

Le Républicain Formaliste veut la République, et croit à la puissance magique des proclamations, des exergues gravés sur les murailles. La République d'abord, on changera les rouages après. Les anciens rouages de la centralisation impériale ou monarchique n'étant pas changés ramènent l'ancien état de choses. Sur la fin de leurs jours, les Républicains Formalistes font comme Grévy ; ils deviennent superstitieux en fait de puissance du changement d'étiquettes, jusqu'à jouer pour rien le rôle des Dupin.

Les Républicains Radicaux, concevant une réorganisation politique conjointement à une organisation sociale ?—Il n'en existe encore, il faut le dire, qu'à l'état de fétus, que sous forme d'aspirations et de besoins. Y pensez-vous ? Il faut Science et Conscience pour réaliser le programme. Or la France a appris à haïr les savans, et à blaguer les hommes de devoir.

(B.) Le Journalisme Républicain Formaliste était représenté par le *Siècle* et l'*Avenir National*. Quelques personnes songeraient, avec le gros et le niais du public, à y joindre le *Temps*. Or, il y a longtemps que de source sûre on sait que l'argent orléaniste, par le canal d'Hébrard, alimente la feuille de Nefftzer, qui n'est du reste pas si simple qu'il est gros, et dont, par un paradoxe physiologique, la formule psychologique est celle-ci : "modérément de vertu, de savoir et de sincérité, exprimé en langage froid et lourd." Après un nombre suffisant de réfrigérations internes par la bière, dans une brasserie plus germanique qu'alsacienne, on arrive à comprendre la valeur nénuphardesque dudit Nefftzer. Le *Siècle* avait eu, avant Sept. 1870, dès l'aube de cette illustre année, sa petite con-

vulsion interne. Un élément soi-disant jeune, représenté par le vieux et grave jeune homme Tenot, par le beau diseur de sonnets d'autrefois, par l'apôtre de l'Evangile artistique selon Courbet, par l'intime ami de Gambetta, par Castagnary pour tout dire, avait, en gardant le toujours jeune Louis Jourdan, évincé l'ancienne et Havinique rédaction. Quand l'investissement arriva, le *Siècle*,—boutiquièrement, pour servir les abonnés de province, politiquement, pour prôner Gambetta,—laissa le menu fretin rédiger la feuille de Paris, et l'état-major *gambettisa* en province. Mais tout cela passait au nez et à la barbe du Conseil de Famille du journal des Hommes du Quatre Septembre : des banquiers de l'affaire. Or, pour tout remettre en bon ordre, se trouvait là l'ostentateur italien, libre-échangiste, économiste de l'école J. B. Say, Henri Cernuschi, qui sait donner deux fois 100,000 francs au Comité anti-plébiscitaire du 8 mai, et qui refuse 200 francs à la veuve de son premier prêteur de fonds, parceque tout le monde saura le premier fait et ignorera le second. Henri Cernuschi, dont le secrétaire était ce Gustave Chaudey, ancien exécuteur testamentaire de P. J. Proudhon, trônait à l'Hôtel de Ville ; c'était l'homme fort, salué par Francisque Sarcey, embrassé par Jules Ferry. Le *Siècle* de Paris fut donc bien vite remis à la raison par la foule des actionnaires, maniés par Cernuschi, qui n'a pas son pareil dans ces sortes d'assemblées. Le *Siècle* de Province *gambettisait* ; la République et la France ne s'en portaient que plus mal. Celui de Paris avait beau recevoir les critiques militaires de Jean Brunet, et inscrire en tête de chaque numéro les fières paroles de Jules Favre : " PIERRE . . . POUCE . . . " Il n'en subissait pas moins cette loi, qu'un journal, qui a fourni au pouvoir ses bailleurs de fonds et son conseil de surveillance, est surveillé et maté par ce pouvoir. Aujourd'hui, la jeune rédaction, dont Girardin se moquait tant à l'origine, n'est plus, et a mérité par sa naïveté les ironiques mercuriales de cet antique et toujours vert proxénète de la plume.

L'*Avenir National* avait placé à l'Hôtel de Ville tout son personnel depuis Floquet et Brisson, premiers ténors du puritanisme républicain dont il fit les adjoints au Maire de Paris—

qui était encore un de ces rédacteurs, le trop vaudevilliste Etienne Arago—jusqu'au *cuisinier* du journal, Jules Mahias, qui devint Secrétaire Général de la Mairie de Paris. Peyrat, rédacteur en chef, ne voulut rien être. C'était le moyen, sans autre droit à la popularité, d'être un jour député, et, se souvenant des leçons de son premier maître, de pouvoir *girardiniser* le Parti.

L'*Avenir National* fut donc une bouche close, pendant toute cette gabegie des Hommes de l'Hôtel de Ville. S'il faisait quelque critique, c'était pour pouvoir absoudre de leur déloyauté, maintenant juridiquement constatée, Favre, Ferry, Dorian, et Schoelcher, qui mentirent si bien au 31 Octobre. Mais les rédacteurs de l'*Avenir National*, Floquet, Brisson donnèrent, cependant, leur démission : la Rédaction de M. Peyrat ne peut, pas plus que la femme de César, être suspectée.

Etienne Arago ne donna pas sa démission, mais, comme compensation, reçut de la République une mission près du Pape, pour lui offrir l'asile de la Corse.

Le *Siècle* et l'*Avenir National* auraient pu éclairer l'opinion, mais qu'attendent de Formalistes ?

(C.) Le Journalisme Républicain Radical était, au 4 Sept., représenté par le *Réveil*, auquel, dès le 5, se joignait la *Patrie en Danger*, organe de Blanqui, et quelques jours plustard le *Combat*, journal de Félix Pyat. La *Marseillaise* fit une sortie maladroite dans la forme—car le signataire était Cluseret—juste au fond. Et le propriétaire du journal, M. Henri Rochefort, alors au pouvoir, étrangla lui-même son enfant. Les bourgeois pardonnèrent beaucoup à M. Rochefort, à cause de ce sacrifice, digne de l'antiquité la plus juive ou la plus romaine. Ils comprirent bien que M. de Rochefort avait les convenances et le bon ton d'un homme bien élevé.

*A tout seigneur tout honneur* : Delescluze est le pontife du dogmatisme radical. Jadis, il fut le souffleur de cette outre qui s'appela Ledru-Rollin ; quand cette outre, démesurément gonflée, se fendit pour être plus à l'aise, Delescluze cessa d'y souffler. Au *Réveil*, Delescluze avait trois apôtres, Razoua, Fr. Cournet et Ch. Quentin. Au Plébiscite de Novembre,

Delescluze commença par conseiller l'abstention, puis abandonna cette théorie trop haute pour lui, puis après le vote regretta de ne pas avoir conseillé sa pratique. Quelques jours avant, quand Félix Pyat annonça les pourparlers d'un officier supérieur de Bazaine pour livrer Metz, quand Pyat déclara tenir la nouvelle de Flourens, et que celui-ci affirma l'avoir appris de la bouche même de Rochefort, et enfin que ce dernier nia son propos et crut se laver en salissant Pyat, Delescluze déclara ne pas vouloir "tremper dans cette saleté." Par je ne sais quelle envie d'accaparer tout initiative, et par une jalousie qui le porte à ne pas soutenir celle qui vient d'autrui, Delescluze laissa le *Combat* seul aux prises avec la Réaction. On faillit assommer Pyat, qui devait, au 31 Octobre, être porté en triomphe. Or, Pyat esquiva les gémonies et l'apothéose. De même, lors du bruit qui courut que le bataillon de marche, dit "Tirailleurs de Belleville," avait lâché pied,—calomnie qui court encore, le journal de Pyat publia les procès-verbaux de l'enquête provoquée par les tirailleurs eux-mêmes, et Delescluze se tint coi. Ce n'est pas tout, Delescluze, envahi par un optimisme qui est dans la nature des hommes qui datent de 1830, parut soutenir Trochu jusqu'à l'avant-dernier moment. Quand tout fut perdu ou livré, Delescluze comprit l'inutilité du sacrifice qu'il avait fait de son opinion intime.

Il aurait rendu plus de services en affirmant le *crétinisme*, maintenant populaire, de Trochu qui avait été prouvé par des hommes compétents, qui avait été écrit en toutes lettres, après preuves, par Blanqui.

Soyons juste même et surtout pour Blanqui. Son journal, paru au lendemain du Quatre Septembre, débuta par cinq articles du maître, exposant la défense de Paris. Cette série d'articles, quoiqu'émanés d'un homme conspué — très-injustement—frappa des militaires, et entre autres un officier supérieur d'état-major, qui proposa ce plan à Trochu. Mais celui-ci, qui taxait Garibaldi de "fou," ne devait tenir compte de pareille communication. Ce plan se résume ainsi : expulsion des bouches inutiles ; *remuer la terre*, c'est à dire, guerre de pelles autant que de canons ; relier et défendre la ligne de

forts par l'occupation des hauteurs ; utiliser toutes les forces, en faisant de Paris non-seulement une garnison et un camp, mais un atelier d'armement et d'habillement, mais un vaste contrée fortifiée, à la fois se défendant et se nourrissant elle-même, tant par la libre entrée de toutes provisions que par la défense de tout le périmètre, si cultivé et si productif, de toute sa banlieue.

Blanqui, déjà calomnié par cette ganache chauvine,—héroïque, je ne le nie pas,—appelée Barbès, Blanqui était, par-dessus le marché, mal entouré: les Blanquistes étant fort inférieurs à Blanqui. Mais, quand on connaît un peu son histoire, ne sait-on pas que *toute époque révolutionnaire a son bouc émissaire*, que la Réaction charge de toutes les iniquités, vraies ou supposées, d'Israel ? Si ce n'est pas Blanqui, c'est Pyat. Et, en le supposant plus réellement vigilant et moins hargneux, c'est à dire moins impuissant, c'eût été Delescluze lui-même. A Rome, si le cri des oies n'eût point été entendu, on eût égorgé les oies en les accusant de connivence avec l'ennemi.

Le seul défaut de Félix Pyat, qu'il reconnaîtrait lui-même, c'est qu'il est vieux, c'est qu'il prêche avec le style démodé de 1830, qu'il est un homme de plume, un artiste arrivé à concevoir l'action, incapable de l'exécuter ; qu'il ne peut avoir d'autorité qu'après que ce qu'il a prédit, sans avoir puissance de l'empêcher, est arrivé. C'est un Rétrospectif, ayant les visées de l'avenir et n'en pouvant construire la route. Cependant, quel progrès accompli depuis ses huileuses élucubrations du *Rappel*, mais il a encore plus de nerfs que de *nerf*. Il a les impuissances de l'époque ; c'est là son infériorité. Il le sait ; c'est là sa supériorité.

(D.) Les élections de 69 avaient été, d'après les idées parlementaires, un réveil de l'opinion, et, en réalité, Paris venait de nommer ceux qui devaient logiquement le gouverner dès que l'Empire tomberait, et qui devaient, tout aussi logiquement, recommencer en l'empirant 1848. Quoi-qu'il en soit, à la ligue Bonapartiste-cléricale-libérale on avait dû opposer une organisation quelconque. Il s'était donc formé des comités. Il ne faut pas oublier que d'adversaires du gouvernement qu'ils étaient en 1863, Jules Favre, Carnot et Garnier-Pagès s'étaient

trouvés, en 1869, véritablement patronnés par ledit gouvernement, par le fait même que, dans les circonscriptions électorales où se présentaient ces pâles combattans, le ministre de l'intérieur d'alors crut inutile de soutenir des candidatures officielles. On comprend que les comités électoraux de 69 avaient inventé autant de nuances du rouge que cette robuste couleur en peut supporter. On comprend encore que les seuls comités, dont un candidat avait réussi en 1869, se trouvaient avoir de l'influence au 4 Sept., 1870, quand ce candidat venait à passer de député à gouvernant. Les autres comités étaient sans pouvoir, et comme n'ayant pu faire réussir leur candidat, soit ayant été lâchés par le candidat devenu député et passé gouvernant. Les comités de Belleville avaient, en effet, très-peu de confiance en Gambetta, depuis qu'il avait fait sa palinodie de Marseille, en 69. Et ce n'est pas l'attitude ambiguë de Gambetta gouvernant qui pouvait amener l'entente entre l'ami de Monsieur Lauri et ses anciens commettans. De même, malgré ses "sous-sols" la conscience de H. Rochefort offrait peu de garanties de solidité aux comités qui l'avaient soutenu contre Favre au quartier d'Ecoles, et à ceux qui l'avaient fait élire au second tour de scrutin dans la circonscription de Montmartre. Ces messieurs de l'Hôtel de Ville mirent d'ailleurs très-vite le marché à la main aux comités qui naguères recevaient d'eux tant de promesses et d'accolades. Donnant, donnant: soutenez-nous, nous vous écouterons; sinon, non. L'Hôtel de Ville se hérissa de commissaires et d'huissiers dès le quatrième ou cinquième jour d'occupation, pour que ces messieurs travaillassent en paix. C'est à dire fussent débarrassés de leurs anciens bienfaiteurs. 1869 a donc légué à 1870 des comités impuissans et désorganisés. En histoire, c'est pis que dans la fable: c'est le soliveau lui-même qui devient grue. La surprise n'en est que plus grande pour ces pauvres grenouilles qui se feront toujours croquer. Soliveau sous l'Empire, M. Ernest Picard s'apprête en mai 1871, la paix conclue, à être grue pour toutes les rainettes républicaines qui coasseront trop haut. Et c'est justice. Pourquoi donner en 1870 la dictature à des soliveaux? Pourquoi en 1869, avoir revêtu, par le vote, des fantômes de puissance?



(E.) Les Comités mécontents fondèrent des Clubs. Les clubs qui, vers la fin de l'Empire, avaient commencé la résistance, se rouvrirent. La Réaction n'eut que deux réunions publiques, celle de Valentino et celle des Folies-Bergères, plus un club académique, celui de la Porte St. Martin. Le club de la Porte St. Martin, malgré Ratisbonne et Francisque Sarcey, ferma ainsi que Valentino. Les Folies-Bergères, à la fin transportées au Casino, expirèrent littéralement dans la fange policière et dans le fumier des *filles* du quartier. Les réunions publiques et les clubs républicains, radicaux ou exagérés, eurent toujours plus de tenue, et essayèrent de se centraliser. Mais à cette centralisation se présenta un double obstacle. La critique étant toujours plus facile que la création, les orateurs qui, sous l'Empire, suffisaient à la tâche, épuisèrent facilement leur répertoire sous la République, quand au *Destruam* il fallait faire suivre l'*Aedificabo* de la Bible. Et puis, le mort saisit toujours le vif. En ce temps de népotisme, qui nous a fait payer Godefroy Cavaignac par Eugène Cavaignac, le premier Garnier-Pagès par le second, si ridiculement entêté de ses 45 centimes etc.,—dans ce pays classique par excellence, qui veut des titres quand même, la première place fut aux anciens exilés, aux ex-proscrits et déportés, à tous ceux qui avaient fait leurs preuves, et hélas ! leur temps. Ce qui empêcha la centralisation fut donc la disette de jeunes et la pléthore de vieux ; ce fut le faux centre appelé Comité Central. Le parti fut perdu à l'avance, non pas seulement parce qu'il n'avait pas de tête, mais parce qu'il s'en crut une. *En France, on croit toujours que son voisin fait double besogne* : les niais simples s'en reposent sur le Gouvernement, les niais plus compliqués attendent tout d'hommes qui iront en prison pour eux, qui risqueront leur peau pour eux, et qui recevront la récompense de passer pour des pillards et des ambitieux. On allait au club comme au spectacle, comme au café, pour passer sa soirée. On votait dix résolutions par soir, et le lendemain, il ne restait de tous ces beaux projets que quelques lignes de procès-verbal, et le souvenir burlesque d'une levée confuse de bras. Cependant, il faut le dire, ce qui devait être fait pour sauver Paris a été dit à

temps, dès le 5, dès le 6 Septembre. Mais ce n'a été que dit. C'est si simple de sortir d'une situation désespérée ; il suffit d'aller tout droit. *Nulla salus . . .* cela a été dit en latin.— Avec le pouvoir dont il disposait, le Comité Central aurait pu faire beaucoup ; mais il a toujours caressé l'espérance ridicule que le public se rendrait à l'évidence d'exposés de principes, et que le Gouvernement recourrait finalement à lui, pour sortir de la situation. Mais, que diable, sortir de la situation, c'était pour MM. Favre, Ferry et consorts, descendre du pouvoir. On ne peut pas plus attendre d'abnégation de parlementaires impériaux que d'heroïsme d'une foule agioteuse, mercantile et bavarde. Le Comité Central a laissé passer la première semaine, cette semaine pendant laquelle ces messieurs de l'Hôtel de Ville s'attendaient à être flanqués à la porte par Piétri ou par son spectre,—la première quinzaine, quand il fallait déjà en venir à de gros mots,—le premier mois, quand les bourgeois étaient revenus de l'exaltation, mêlée de crainte, à l'intérêt sordide, doublé d'insolence vis à vis de ces gens qui ne savaient pas profiter de la victoire. A l'instigation de ce Comité Central, le parti républicain, qui seul voulait et pouvait la défense, faisait des affiches rouges, dans lesquelles on indiquait ces moyens connus de toutes les villes assiégées qui ne veulent pas se rendre.—On déchirait les affiches, en disant que c'était le pillage qu'on demandait.—Ce parti bête faisait des démonstrations pacifiques comme celle du 8 Octobre ;—et la Réaction comptait ses baionnettes et celles des mobiles bretons. Cependant, le désastre du Bourget et la nouvelle, officielle enfin, de la reddition de Metz amenaient le 31 Octobre. Même à cette date si éloignée du 4 Sept., en ces temps de minutes-siècles, le parti fut encore plus surpris que la Réaction, et la journée, gagnée à deux heures du soir, était perdue à cinq heures.

(F.) Les fautes, commises vis à vis du parti républicain entier par le Comité Central, ont été faites d'une manière plus spéciale, et par suite plus dommageable, par l'Association Internationale vis à vis de la fraction la plus importante du parti, la fraction ouvrière.

L'Internationale, et les Fédérations issues d'elle, ont certes,

sous l'Empire, combattu un bon combat. C'étaient de solides débuts que ces procès successifs, que les membres en vue soutenaient, et que des inconnus, venant prendre la place des emprisonnés, continuaient avec un courage et une connaissance approfondie des droits d'homme et de citoyen, jusqu'ici nominale-ment accordés, mais en réalité refusés à l'ouvrier.

Mais, il faut le dire, le temps n'est pas le seul facteur de la vie. Tous les *petits poissons ne deviennent pas grands*, et ils ne font pas tous également bonne mine dans la friture. Philosophiquement, le temps est la plus creuse de toutes les formules, quand il n'est pas la plus concrète. Peut-être, à coup sûr même, l'Association Internationale avait besoin de quelques années de plus d'élaboration pour pouvoir diriger la classe ouvrière au milieu des périls internes et externes, que nous avait faits l'invasion. Les ouvriers sont encore mineurs. De la confiance, ou mieux de l'indifférence béate, ils sont passés, sans transition, à la défiance et à l'agitation, plus stérile que réellement active. La plupart d'entre ceux qui ont émergé de la stagnation impériale, ont hérité des défauts de leur adversaires, avocats et patrons : formalisme et exclusivisme. A cheval, pendant une période, sur la légalité, chatouilleux sur le point de droit, ils se cabrent aux résistances, et enfourchent le dada des grands mots et des résolutions extrêmes,—quitte, au 31 Octobre, à s'en aller, quand rien n'est fait,—au 22 Janvier, à être cinq cents au lieu de cinquante mille. Et de cela, quand on a le temps devant soi, il ne faut ni s'étonner ni se plaindre. Ils m'ont toujours semblé ridicules, autant qu'impuissans, ces anti-esclavagistes de cabinet, qui, débarqués à la Nouvelle Orléans, faisaient Pouah ! en face du nègre. Mais, si les classes opprimées étaient intéressantes par elles-mêmes, il n'y aurait ni mérite, ni nécessité à s'intéresser à elles. Attend-on que l'enfant bégaye pour lui parler, et que l'ouvrier soit un sage et un docteur en blouse, pour déclarer qu'il faut l'instruire, et le décharger du bât féodal. En France, à Paris, on a toujours semblé compter sur ce prodige. Eh bien, l'ouvrier essaie de se sauver lui-même ; tantôt, il change une servitude pour une autre, tantôt il rue à se casser les jambes. A cela rien d'éton-

nant, rien d'alarmant même—quand on a le temps devant soi ; mais, quand la Fatalité vient poser brutalement son dilemme shakespearien : Etre ou bien n'être pas, la philosophie est moins facile. En étant moins sectaire, moins dogmatique, plus pratique et plus radicale à la fois, l'Association Internationale pouvait, en ce temps de suffrage universel, imposer la loi du nombre qui, dans une ville assiégée, était tout simplement l'intérêt de la généralité et l'honneur de tous. Pas plus que les autres élémens du parti, l'Internationale n'a compris le joint de la situation, qui est celui-ci, et que je vais dire : il fallait, *sans mettre en avant aucune question sociale, en se gardant bien de commettre une telle faute*, mettre à l'étude, soumettre à l'opinion publique, proposer, ordonner toutes les mesures radicales que l'état de siège comportait, et tout cela au nom exclusif du salut commun ; il fallait la Commune, la municipalité élue, *sans la dire révolutionnaire*, puisque toute ville assiégée, qui veut résister jusqu'au bout, est révolutionnaire par nécessité. Il fallait s'aboucher avec tous patriotes, de quelque opinion que ce fût ; *il fallait abdiquer toute prétention d'imposer à la province le gouvernement de la municipalité de Paris*.<sup>\*</sup> Et voilà : car le reste est compris dans cette vue d'ensemble. Mais l'Empire nous a appris à tirer chacun la couverture, à mentir aux autres et à nous-mêmes, à grossir notre effectif, nos ressources, notre force, en un mot à railler et à imiter le style de ses dépêches et bulletins : l'Association Internationale ne tenait pas dans sa main, comme elle le donnait à entendre, toute la population ouvrière de Paris. Elle était, de plus, divisée en elle-même—qu'on juge des autres élémens du parti : c'était et c'est le plus actif et le plus sincère.

(G.) Les *Clubs Départementaux* se fondèrent après l'investissement. Toute communication entre Paris et la province étant impossible, c'est à dire se bornant ridiculement à l'envoi du *Journal Officiel* de Paris à la province, et à quelques émissaires postaux ou militaires de la province à Paris, les ballons ne

\* The reader will recognise in this last clause the enunciation of the cardinal point in the programme of the Communal Revolution of the 18th March.

servant qu'à masquer une des clauses du plan notarié de Trochu, celle-ci—*que Gambetta ne devait pas être tenu au courant de ce qui se passait à Paris, et que non seulement Paris, mais les autres membres du Gouvernement, excepté lui et Picard, ignoreraient les plus importantes dépêches de Gambetta,*—pour cela, Trochu les gardait en poche—bref, Paris isolé de la province, on comprend que des républicains de province, ou en relation ordinaire avec la province, durent penser à se grouper par expressions géographiques, pour pouvoir, une fois le déblocage opéré, répandre et diffuser le verbe républicain dans ces départements restés monarchiques par torpeur et par éducation cléricale. L'idée des Clubs Départementaux était donc excellente; elle n'a pu donner aucun résultat appréciable, par la raison fort simple, que les meilleurs docteurs n'arrivent jamais en consultation que pour constater l'*in articulo mortis* du malade. Or, la province française était, de par l'Empire et toutes les monarchies précédentes, plus malade que Paris. Le sentiment maternel est le dernier instinct qui reste aux femmes non encore tout-à-fait déchues. Il en est de même du sentiment patriotique pour les nations qui se décomposent. La province n'a pas même eu le sentiment patriotique; elle voulait, non par tactique, mais par inertie vitale, elle voulait la paix; c'est pour cela qu'elle a envoyé à l'Assemblée de Bordeaux les crânes les plus chenus, les poitrines les plus catarrheuses; elle a voté, contre ses sympathies, pour les nobles et les légitimistes; c'est qu'elle a demandé seulement à ses candidats une chose bien simple: voter la paix quand même, la paix à tout prix. On recommence 48: au lieu de faire les élections au lendemain du mouvement, on les fait, quand le mouvement expire, et qu'une réaction le recouvre comme un contre-flot, et le dépasse. Les "habiles" font: les "niais" laissent faire.

Maintenant qu'est épuisée l'analyse de ces élémens du Parti: (A.) Avocats dits ou se disant républicains. (B.) Journalisme Républicain Formaliste. (C.) Journalisme Républicain Radical. (D.) Restes des Comités Electoraux de 1869. (E.) Clubs Radicaux. (F.) Association Internationale. (G.) Clubs Départementaux,—il nous faut les voir à l'œuvre dans leur entente, dans

leurs conflits, dans leurs efforts de *montagne accouchant à souris Thiers*.

On ne prend que là où il y a : c'est un axiome financier, dans les époques critiques pour les questions politiques, surtout nationales. Les Hommes du Quatre Septembre, accordaient les municipalités élues un moment, pour les refaire l'heure d'après, et qui gagnèrent à ce petit manège le temps de se concilier l'épaisse bourgeoisie, enfin remise de ses alarmes. Les Hommes du Quatre Septembre ne pouvaient, tout idéalisés qu'ils fussent, conserver les maires bonapartistes de Paris. Ils en nommèrent d'office. Où les prirent-ils ? — Forment, dans ce qui était, dans ce qui vivait encore, dans les élémens énoncés plus haut. M. Tenaille-Saligny, maire du 1<sup>er</sup> Arrondissement, avocat et même avocat à la Cour de Cassation (catégorie A). Floquet et Brisson, qu'on adjoignit au Maire de Paris, rédacteurs de *l'Avenir National* ; Henri Martin, du 12<sup>e</sup> Arrondissement nommé maire de Passy, c'est la catégorie B. — François Favre, maire de Batignolles, ce journaliste signant au *Réveil* : catégorie D. fort édulcorée, il est vrai, — car Fr. Favre a été administrateur plus que médiocre, et plus médiocre encore a été son attitude politique en face d'un gouvernement, cachant toutes ses opérations, pour tout révéler la veille d'un inévitable désastre d'une faillite déjà escomptée. Ribeaucourt, maire du 7<sup>e</sup> Arrondissement, Robinet, maire du 6<sup>e</sup>, Bertillon, maire du 5<sup>e</sup>, appartenaient à la catégorie D. — L'Association Internationale régnait avec Mottu au 11<sup>e</sup>, et avec Bonvalet au 3<sup>e</sup>, — catégorie F. — Les Clubs Radicaux (catégorie E), étaient, par les Comités de Vigilance ou de Défense ou d'Armement, qu'ils avaient formés dans chaque arrondissement, en relation directe, étroite, et le plus souvent amicale avec les maires respectifs. *Chaque mairie, du 4 Sept. au 8, — ou tout au plus, — au 15 Octobre, était une république en miniature, et quelques-unes ont fonctionné très-bien, à la satisfaction même des réactionnaires, qui, en tant qu'administrés, aiment la promptitude et la justice qu'ils réprouvent dans le gouvernement.* Si les hommes de l'Hôtel de Ville avaient, au point de vue politique, reçu les suggestions des maires, au point de vue militaire, les avis des comités scientifiques fonctionnant au

mairies ; si, en reprenant une assiette qu'ils devaient aux maires d'arrondissement, les Hommes du Quatre Septembre n'avaient pas, au fur et à mesure, resserré, limité, contrarié, contrecarré l'action des maires ; si, d'un autre côté, ceux-ci avaient pressé, dès fin Septembre, pour avoir des élections municipales, ou s'ils avaient compris l'esprit révolutionnaire, c'est à dire s'ils s'étaient imposés, eux et leurs projets de réforme républicaine et de *défense offensive*, 'au faible Maire de Paris, Etienne Arago, si beaucoup de ces honorables mais peu énergiques fonctionnaires n'avaient pas espéré soit dans le puritanisme étriqué de Brisson, soit dans l'ogrerie—fort peu dangereuse au fond, de Floquet, les adjoints d'Arago, si les maires de Paris avaient sommé le gouvernement de ce borner au zéro représentant les affaires générales (ballons et dépêches) et s'ils avaient pris leur dû, la gestion de Paris, qu'ils devaient nourrir et qu'ils devaient défendre, tout se fut évidemment passé autrement, sans désordre, sans Trente-et-Un Octobre. Un maire disait à l'auteur de ces lignes : “ Vous verrez ce que je ferai quand j'aurai la force, quand je serai élu ; ”—et celui qui écrit maintenant après les événements, mais non sans avoir déjà dit et redit tout ce qu'il écrit maintenant, répondit à ce maire ; “ quand on veut être élu, il faut agir comme si on avait la force et la force vient. Citoyen Maire, vous ne serez pas élu.” En dehors de la hiérarchie telle que l'Empire l'avait établie, on ne concevait encore après le 4 Septembre que désordre, parce que l'ordre véritable, la vraie division et organisation des pouvoirs, tout cela est inconnu de tous ceux qui se sont gâté la main, l'esprit et le cœur à faire la petite guerre, la guerre parlementaire à l'Empire, que l'on laissait ainsi légitimer son crime et qu'ainsi on ne pouvait renverser que par d'autres faux serments. Les vingt maires, leurs quarante adjoints se laissaient diriger à rebours par Etienne Arago, et ses lieutenants Floquet et Brisson. Et les maires sentaient bien aux mille petits faits de la vie administrative, aux longues conférences de l'Hôtel de Ville, qu'on ne conduisait pas Paris à la victoire. Mais impérialisés, confondant le plébiscite captieux avec l'appel au Peuple—simple et carré sur des questions nettes et vitales, ils n'avaient pas

l'audace d'accomplir le devoir de crier haut ce que leur conscience leur murmurait : "Peuple, on te trompe . . ."

En cédant même aux premiers jours qui permettaient de s'imposer, en acceptant le terrain impérialiste, ces maires, simples agens administratifs du gouvernement de l'Hôtel de Ville, encoururent la disgrâce de la population qui, n'entendant pas malice aux rouages de l'Administration, accusait les maires d'être la cause du peu de quantité de nourriture distribuée, de la mauvaise étoffe des vareuses, de l'enterrement des projets de défense, de la lenteur de l'armement, que sais-je ?—de tout ; et les malheureux maires n'étaient que des commis, et des commis non payés ; mais—où va se nicher le dévouement ?

A force d'appeler les membres du Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale tantôt Hommes du Quatre Septembre, tantôt Messieurs de l'Hôtel de Ville, il convient de dire comment le public si nerveux de Paris a expliqué la première appellation qu'ils se sont donnée, et pourquoi ce même public leur a donné les seconde et troisième.\*

\* My friend's MS. ends here abruptly. Three days after this letter was despatched, the Revolution of the 18th March called him off from theory to action. Alas! he was not destined to witness the triumph of his ideas. I have too much reason to fear that with many other noble and heroic victims, he has been foully murdered by the soldiers of GENERAL MARQUIS DE GALLIFET, SUB-EXECUTIONER to the Assembly of Versailles.



## APPENDIX II.\*

## FRENCH REPUBLIC.

LIBERTY—EQUALITY—FRATERNITY.

## COMMUNE OF PARIS.

## PROGRAMME.

IN the grievous and ghastly conflict which has once more covered Paris with the horrors of siege and bombardment, which sheds French blood, and which destroys with shot and shell our brethren, our wives, our children, it is necessary that public opinion should not be divided and that the national consciousness should be clear from doubt. It is necessary for Paris and the whole country to know what is the nature, the reason, the aim of the Revolution which is now in progress. It is necessary in short that the responsibility of the sorrows, of the suffering and of the ills of which we are the victims should fall upon those who, after having betrayed France and delivered up Paris to the foreigner, pursue with blind and cruel obstinacy the ruin of the capital in order to bury in the disaster of the Republic and of Liberty the double proof of their treachery and their crime.

It is the duty of the Commune to affirm and to define the aspirations and desires of the people of Paris, stating precisely what is the meaning of the movement begun on the 18th of March, which has been ignored, misunderstood, and misrepresented by the politicians who now sit at Versailles.

Paris works and suffers once more, for all France, preparing

\* The Manifesto of the Commune to the People of England, translated (I believe) by Félix Pyat himself, and printed at the "Imprimerie Nationale." I reproduce it *verbatim*.

for it, by fighting and by sacrifice, intellectual, moral, administrative and economical regeneration, glory and prosperity.

What is it that Paris claims ?

The recognition and the consolidation of the Republic, the only form of government compatible with the rights of the people and with the regular and free development of society.

The absolute self-government of the Commune extended to every locality in France, and assuring to each commune the integrity of its rights, and to every Frenchman the full exercise of his faculties and aptitudes as a man, a citizen and a worker.

The self-government of the Commune will have no limits but the equal right of self-government which must be accorded to all the other communes entering into the contract and necessarily forming by their association the unity of France.

The inherent rights of the Commune are:

The voting of the communal budget of income and expenditure; the assessment of taxes; the direction of local services; the organisation of the magistracy, of interior police and of public instruction; the administration of the property of the commune; the election either by choice or by competition, with the responsibility and the permanent right of control and of revocation of the magistrates and communal functionaries of every order. The absolute security of individual liberty, the liberty of conscience and the liberty of work. The permanent interference of the citizens in the affairs of the commune by the free expression of their ideas, and the free defence of their interests, guarantees of safety being given to these manifestations by the commune which is alone charged with the duty of supervising and of assuring the free and fair exercise of the right of meeting and of publication. The organisation of the town defences and of the National Guards who elect their chiefs and have alone to watch over and to maintain order in the city.

Paris wishes for nothing more in the way of local guarantees, on the condition of course that the great Central Administration constituted by delegation from the federated communes shall be found to realise and to practise the same principles.

But thanks to its self-government and profiting by its liberty

of action, Paris reserves to itself the right of directing as it may deem fit such administrative and economical reforms as its population may demand, of creating institutions to develop and propagate education, manufactures, free trade and credit, as well as to universalise power and property according to the necessities of the hour, the wishes of those interested and the lessons furnished by experience.

Our enemies deceive themselves or they deceive the country when they accuse Paris of wishing to impose its will or its supremacy upon the rest of the nation, and of pretending to a dictatorship which would be an outrage upon the independence and the sovereignty of the other communes.

They deceive themselves or they deceive the country when they accuse Paris of seeking the destruction of the French unity constituted by the Revolution amid the acclamations of our fathers who had gathered from all parts of old France to the Fête of the Federation.

Unity, such as the Empire, the Monarchy and Parliamentarism have hitherto imposed it upon us, has been but a despotic, unintelligent, arbitrary and onerous centralisation.

Political unity, such as Paris desires, is the voluntary association of every local initiative, the spontaneous and free concurrence of all individual energies in one common aim, the well-being, the liberty, and the security of all.

The Communal Revolution, begun by the popular initiative of the 18th March, inaugurates a new era of experimental, positive, scientific politics.

It is the end of the old governmental and clerical world of militarism, of professional politics, of political farming, of jobbery, of monopoly, of privileges, to which the people owe their bondage and the country its misfortunes and disasters.

The struggle between Paris and Versailles is one of those which cannot end by an illusory compromise: the issue must not be doubtful. Victory, pursued with indomitable energy by the National Guard will remain with the idea and with right.

We appeal to France.

Informed that Paris in arms possesses as much calm as

bravery; that she sustains order with as much energy as enthusiasm; that she sacrifices herself with as much reason as heroism; that she has taken up arms only through devotion to the liberty and glory of all, let France put an end to this bloody conflict.

It is for France to disarm Versailles by the solemn manifestation of her irresistible will.

Called to benefit by our conquests, let it declare itself one with us in our efforts; let it be our ally in the struggle which cannot end but *by the triumph of the communal idea or else by the ruin of Paris.*

As for us, citizens of Paris, we have for our mission to achieve the modern revolution, the greatest and the most fruitful of all those which have illuminated history.

Our duty is to fight and to conquer.

#### THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

*April 19th, 1871.*

THE END.

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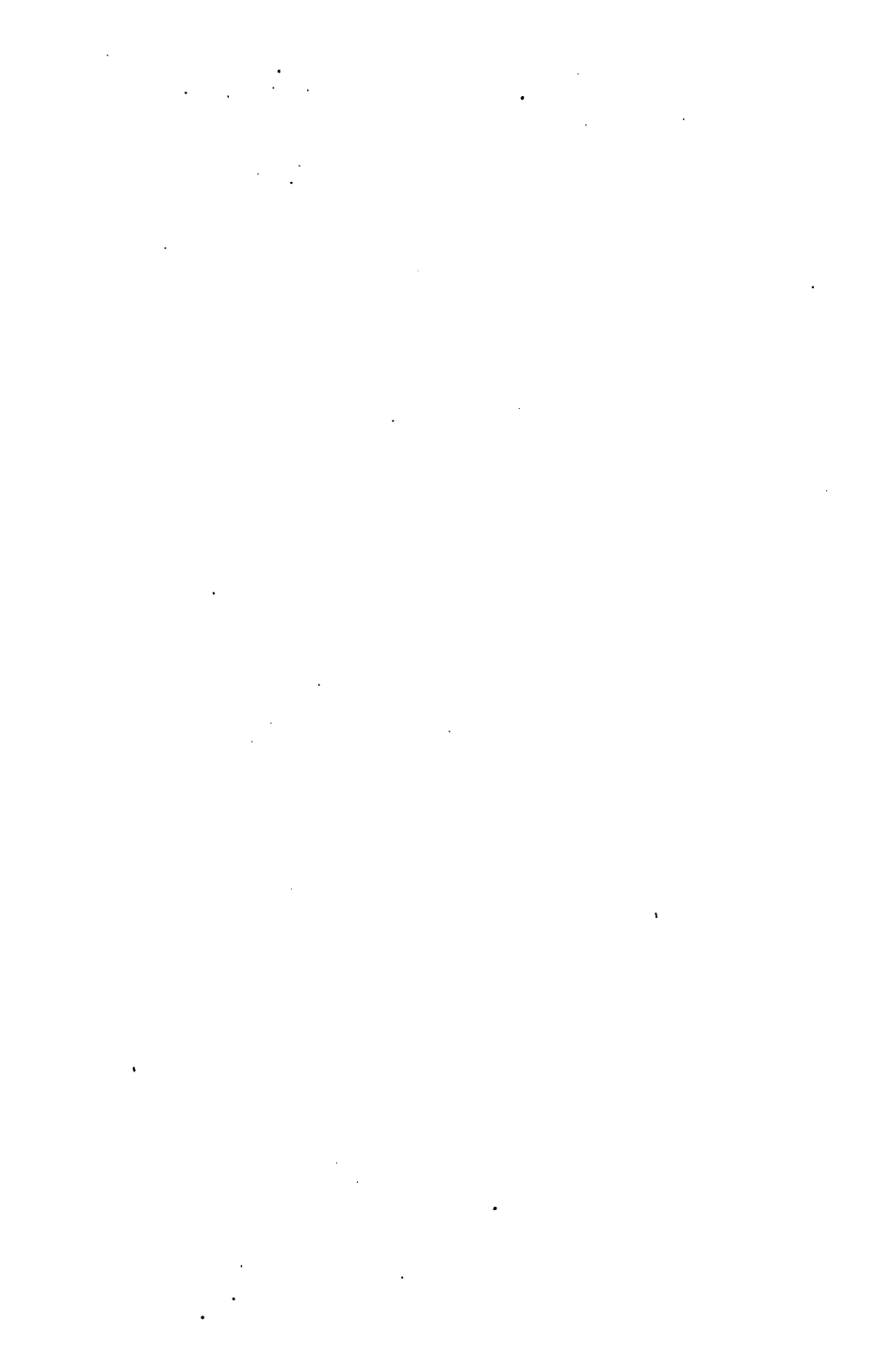
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